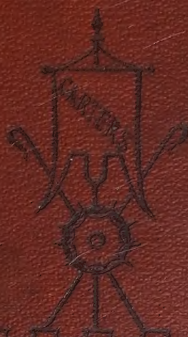
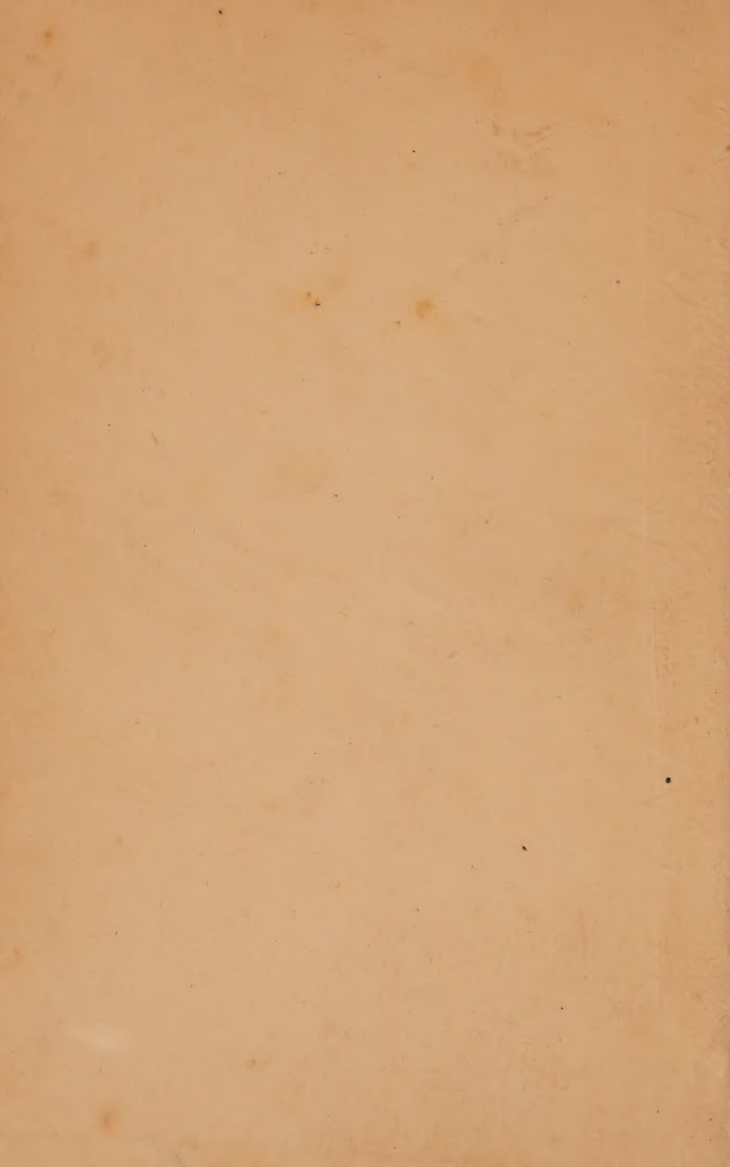


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To

Rawsie.

from his
Affectionate
Mother.

Merry Christmas
1874.









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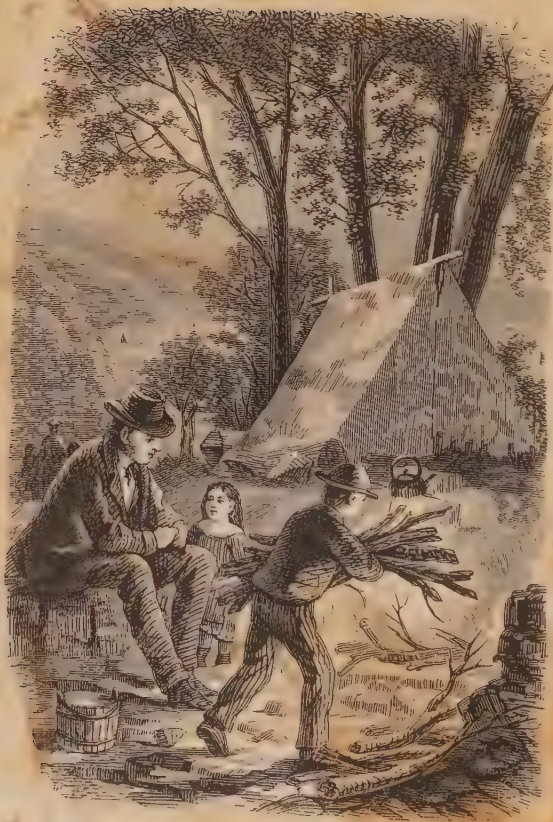
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THE LITTLE CAMP

ON

EAGLE HILL.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“THE WIDE WIDE WORLD.”

“When thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” — DEUT. xi. 19.



NEW YORK:

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THE LITTLE CAMP.

CHAPTER I.

THE scene is a pleasant room, well furnished, well lighted, where four or five people are sitting. No signs of want of anything, anywhere. Doubtless the people have long purses. Two gentlemen are at a table reading under the blaze of a Carcelle lamp. One lady is doing fancy work a little further off, near the fireplace; this lady is handsome, and richly appointed, and sits in a luxurious bergère, with her foot on a cushion. Another lady, and she has a grave, quiet face of business, is looking over papers, and correcting manuscripts; she has a table to herself, and a handful of children's exercises lie before her. A third lady sits gazing into the empty fireplace, as people do when they muse. She

wears a black dress and an intent face ; and she is the one to break a long silence.

“ Brother ” —

“ Well ? ” comes from one of the gentlemen at the table, who however does not look up.

“ Don’t you want those children of yours to learn how to pray while they are young ? ”

“ I thought they had learnt it ? ” said the person addressed, turning his head from his newspaper this time.

“ What an idea ! ” said the lady at the embroidery. “ Martha, they have said their prayers ever since they were two years old. They are not heathen.”

“ Yes, and Esther is eleven, and Fenton is thirteen. Even Maggie has been, at that rate, seven years at it.”

“ At what ? ”

“ Well — may as well call it parrot-work as anything ; if it isn’t profanity.”

“ I do not know what you mean,” said the lady in the bergère, with a slight toss of

her head as it went back to the embroidery. The other gentleman now looked up and smiled ; and the lady at the table suspended her shifting of sheets of paper.

“ I mean just that,” the first speaker went on.

“ I never saw children less like parrots,” their mother responded. “ Fenton is never easy till he has got to the inside of everything. Only yesterday the servants came to me with a complaint that the work was stopped, because Master Fenton had taken the faucet, or something, out of the new washing machine, to discover how it was put in.”

“ They are none of them dull,” said the gentleman with the newspaper, who still sat listening, as if to know where all this would end.

“ Brother, did you ever ask one of them what the Lord’s prayer means, for instance ? or any petition in it ? ”

“ I never did,” said Mr. Candlish. “ They all repeat it every night.”

"They must be dull children if they do not know what it means," their mother said. "Why they have been taught it, sister Martha, ever since they were two years old. I should think they would understand it by this time. Esther had to be whipped before she would learn it, too."

"Did *you* ever ask them, Patty?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"Well. Maggie did not know whom she was speaking to. Esther did not know what she wanted; and Fenton confessed that he never thought anything about it at all, and did not for his part see any use in the whole thing."

"Fenton approves of nothing that he cannot make a practical matter," Mrs. Candlish observed, half laughing; but the others in the room did not laugh.

"This must not go on," Mr. Candlish said after a pause. And then another pause.

"It wont do them any good to begin

preaching to them, I can tell you that," Mrs. Candlish said, half seriously. "It never did me. I did not listen, to begin with; and if I had to listen I hated it. I warn you, don't begin with Fenton."

"Stop their prayers, at any rate," said Mr. Candlish.

"Stop their prayers!" his wife echoed, looking round from her needle. "My grandmother's shade will not rest to-night, Candlish. Nonsense!"

"I mean it, though," said the gentleman setting his teeth. "Stop their saying that prayer till they can speak it intelligently. I'll have no more of this parrot-work."

"Why not try to make it intelligent, instead of stopping it?" his sister asked.

"I am going from home, you know, for several days."

"Mayn't I try what I can do in the mean time?"

"And let me try too," said the other gentleman, who had not yet spoken.

"You may spare your trouble," Mrs. Candlish said. "Preaching never did any children good yet."

"I shall not preach to them," said Mr. Murray.

"Nor I," said Mrs. Ponsonby.

"And certainly I shall not," Mr. Candlish added.

"What then?"

"You need not be terrified, sister, at the thought of so many preachers in your house," Mr. Murray said laughing. "I make a proposition. The children must not have too much at once, either. Let us give each other fair play. Suppose we take them in turn each night for an hour before they go to bed."

"They will be sleepy," put in Mrs. Candlish.

"Not while *I* am talking to them; for I shall stop as soon as I see an eyelid wink."

"But one evening, one talk, would not be

enough to explain to them thoroughly one petition in the Lord's prayer—not near enough.”

“Then let us all keep to one clause or petition,” said Mr. Candlish, “until we have each in turn talked about it; and then take up the next in like manner. Miss Eldon, it would do no harm if you would make a fourth with us. There is work enough.”

“I should be very happy,” said Miss Eldon. “I should like it very much. I will do what I can; and thank you for letting me in.”

“*What* will you do?” said Mrs. Candlish. “I think you are all absurd.”

“My dear,” said her husband, “we will, by the blessing of heaven, make the children so understand what they say when they say the Lord's prayer, that they shall never forget or fail to understand it again for the rest of their lives. And that will be something worth working for.”

“You will preach,” said Mrs. Candlish.

"You cannot help it. And then they will not hear you."

"*You* shall not hear, at any rate," said Mr. Murray. "I am going to have the children alone."

And so it was agreed.

CHAPTER II.

IT was the next evening after the talk among the older people. All day long the sun's rays had beat down on the hills, the lawn and the flowers, with a power that threatened to scorch everything living and leave the earth bare; and the river in its liquid flow seemed but a mirror to reflect the heat and them. Children and grown people had kept under shelter, and not ventured a head out; scarcely a look, the glare and the fierce heat were so unbearable. Now at last the sun's disk had sunk behind the western hills; and a grateful shadow fell over the river, over the house valley, and upon the lower slopes of the opposite shore. The sunlight was on the hill tops there yet, but the curtain of shadow was spreading up and up momentarily.

As the sun withdrew, all the occupants of the house had turned out, to get what freshness there was in the air, or at least to escape from the closeness of four walls. The grown-up people sat in garden chairs on the terrace or lay outstretched on the embrowned turf of the terrace bank; the children were the only ones who had any spirit left for action. Fenton was careering about on a little brown donkey; and his two little sisters ran after him, as if there were no such things as hot days in the world. A black and tan terrier and a shaggy Skye ditto followed their footsteps, with such absurd and unaccountable gambols and quite unnecessary wrestling-matches and races, as made it evident *they* saw nothing to object to in the weather. Another little girl, very elegantly dressed, sat with the elders on the terrace; she with her mother was visiting at Mosswood.

“I wish I were a dog!” said Mr. Candlish in a lazy tone of admiration, eying the youngsters.

“Why not wish you were a child?” said his brother.

“That would involve growing up — and I should find myself at the same point again.”

Mr. Murray laughed softly. “I did not know you were so literal. But *this* point might not be reached again; for it seems to me I never saw anything like it before. Not here at least.”

“It has been frightful!” said Mrs. Candlish.

“Nothing is *frightful* that ends in such an evening,” remarked Mr. Murray. “Look at the colour on the ridge of that hill, and on the little flecks of cloud above it.”

“It looks hot!” said Mrs. Candlish. “We shall have just such another day to-morrow.”

“If I thought that,” — said Mr. Murray, bringing himself to a half sitting posture, “I should be inclined to migrate. It would be nice on the top of Eagle Hill, I dare say, this weather.”

"Why it would be hotter up there, Mr. Murray," said the lady visiter aforesaid.

"That would not be according to my experience of hill tops."

"Yes, but it is mine, though. You get so heated in going up, and by the time you get cool it is time to come down again. It don't pay, I assure you."

"O but I did not intend to come down again;—not till the weather changes."

"What will you do at night?" asked the lady with opening eyes.

"What I don't do here;—sleep."

"Is it really cooler up there, do you think?"

"I should certainly carry blankets with me,—and need them."

"Blankets! you're joking, Mr. Murray?"

"No, I'm not. Except in the middle of the day, now, you would want a shawl round you."

"O do let us go there then," said the lady.

"I'm almost dead. If one could fly there

and back again! — How *do* you get up, Mr. Murray?”

“Without wings.”

“Can you ride up?”

“Not a bit of it. Hard climbing.”

“Blankets and all, too?”

“No way but climbing for them all.”

“Are there trees up there to give shade?”

“Not very many. But trees all the way up.”

“You could not be up there, or anywhere, without shelter, in this August sun.”

“I suppose not.”

“How would you manage, then?”

“Have a tent, I guess.”

“You couldn’t get a tent up there very easily, if it is such hard climbing.”

“Well, perhaps not very easily; but I think of trying.”

“You are not in earnest, Eden?” Mrs. Candlish asked.

“It’s very hard to be in earnest, in this weather! But so far as I can understand the state of my mind, — I think I am.”

"Why it would be a dreadful job, Eden."

"Then I shall *have* to be in earnest."

"You would want provisions, too, Mr. Murray," said Mrs. McAllister.

"I suppose I could eat with some appetite up there," said Eden. "It is a good idea. I'll take provisions."

"*What* will you take, uncle Eden?" the youngest of the children asked, coming up from her chase of the donkey at this moment, and standing flushed and panting at the edge of the bank. "What did you say you would take?"

"Something to eat."

"*Now?*" inquired the little questioner in surprise.

"Not now, Daisy. It's too hot."

This seemed to be satisfactory; and Maggie stood silent for half a minute; then her childish wits threaded their way to the meaning of her uncle's words.

"Where are you going, uncle Eden?"

"Nowhere. He is joking," said Mrs. Candlish.

“Maggie knows I don’t joke. I think of going, Daisy, to the top of Eagle Hill.”

“O, to get huckleberries?” the child cried eagerly.

“That’s a new view of the case,” said Mr. Murray. “I did not think of the huckleberries. Are you sure there are any?”

“There’s lots!” said Maggie, with a joyous swing of her two little arms. And forthwith she set off down the bank and across the lawn at the top of her speed, crying “Esther! — Fenton! — Uncle Eden is going to Eagle Hill after huckleberries!”

Uncle Eden looked over at the children with a lurking smile at the corners of his mouth. “I am in for it now,” said he.

And presently with a bound Fenton jumped from the back of the donkey, which was left to its own devices, and the three young ones came racing over the grass to the foot of the terrace bank where Mr. Murray lay.

“Are you going to Eagle Hill, uncle Eden?”

“O uncle Eden! are you going to Eagle Hill?”

“What have you done with your donkey?”

“He wont do anything. Are you going to Eagle Hill, sir — uncle Eden?”

And before Mr. Murray could answer, came from Esther, “Oh, uncle Eden! take us along.”

“What shall I do with you up there?”

“Why *nothing*, sir; only take us. Will you?”

“Jack is very near your mother’s beautiful ‘Giant of battles.’”

“That’s *my* ‘Giant of battles,’ uncle Eden,” Esther said gently. “Jack wont touch it; he never does anything to the roses. Uncle Eden, please answer us!”

“He will!” said Maggie clapping her small hands; “I know he will.”

“You too, you baggage?” said her uncle. “I should have my hands full.”

“No, sir; only three. We shall not fill your hands. O do, please, uncle Eden!”

“How do you suppose it is to be man-

aged?" said Mr. Murray, raising himself to a sitting posture. "If I go, I shall stay up there a day or two; maybe three."

But the general little scream of excitement and delight which this announcement drew forth, seemed at least to be aware of no hindrance in the proposition.

"Sleep up there!" — and, "Cook our own dinners?" cried Fenton and Esther respectively.

"Might carry them ready cooked," said Mr. Murray.

"Oh, but that wouldn't be so much fun."

"You think not."

"No, sir. But how can you sleep up there, uncle Eden? You'd have nothing over your head."

"On the contrary; *if* I sleep there, I shall have something between me and the moonlight, I promise you."

"What could you have, uncle Eden?" queried Maggie.

"This is getting serious," said Mr. Murray

laughing. "If four of us go, we shall want a great deal. I am satisfied with a little, myself."

"O but, we are little ourselves," pleaded Maggie. "We couldn't want much. I'll eat ever so little, uncle Eden, while we're up there."

"But we're *five*, sir," said Fenton; "here's Josie McAllister."

"She don't want to go and rough it on Eagle Hill among the huckleberry bushes."

"O yes — if you please — I should like to go," said Josie.

"Have you got a dress you could go in?" Mr. Murray asked. "It don't do to be fashionable, Josie, when we go to camp out among the wild creatures. You mustn't wear anything elegant."

"I don't believe she's got any thing that aint ruffled," said Maggie in a plaintive voice; "but I'll lend her one of my big aprons."

"I couldn't wear it!" said Josie. "It's too small."

“O they’re *very* big,” said Maggie shaking her head, as if the enveloping power of the aprons was a thing not to be questioned.

“But, uncle Eden, wont you say that you will take us?” begged Fenton earnestly; for he knew, the promise once given, nothing short of an earthquake would hinder its fulfilment.

“There are two or three words to that bargain,” said Mr. Murray. “I will take you, — *provided* —”

“Ah, ‘provided’ what, uncle Eden? Don’t spoil it,” pleaded Esther; and Maggie and Fenton looked on intently, waiting.

“*Provided*, in the first place, I go myself.”

“Ah yes, of course! we mean that,” they chorussed.

“Provided, second, that your mother and father do not prevent me.”

“They always let you do everything you want to, uncle Eden.”

“Third,” — said Mr. Murray shewing his

white teeth a little, "that we can get provisions enough."

"Shall we want a great deal?" asked Maggie wistfully.

"A great deal! I am always very hungry up in the mountains."

"I'll run and ask Hodges to bake ever so much bread, and have a whole piece of meat roasted; if you say yes."

"I haven't said yes yet. Fourth, that Mrs. Ponsonby will consent to let her Betsey be of the party."

There was a general rush to the house, to find Mrs. Ponsonby; even Josie McAllister moving after the others with some animation; as the flutter of her skirts and the swaying of her short hoop manifested. Mr. Murray lay back on the terrace bank, still smiling to himself.

"I observe you do not ask your sister and me, Mr. Murray," observed Mrs. McAllister.

"It is against my habit to waste anything," replied the gentleman languidly.

“Waste anything! What would you be wasting if you asked us?”

“My words.”

“Oh! — Few people are so careful as that.”

“I know it.”

“But perhaps they would not be wasted. How do you know that we would not go?”

“I have a certain interior conviction on that point. But lest I should by any chance be mistaken, I make it a certainty by refraining to ask,” said Mr. Murray, with provoking clearness and a mischievous broadening of the smile above noted.

“I don’t know that that settles the question. Mr. Candlish, could not your gallantry rouse up in aid of two neglected ladies. We might go *without* this gentleman’s help and permission.”

“I have no gallantry when the thermometer gets up to 94° in the shade,” Mr. Candlish replied.

“It would be ridiculous!” Mrs. Candlish asserted.

“Gallantry?” queried Mrs. McAllister.

“No; going up the mountain.”

“Your brother does not think so.”

“My brother is peculiar in many things.”

“You will let Josie go, Mrs. McAllister?”

“If she can —” Mrs. McAllister said hesitatingly. “It would be very good for her; she wilts under this weather.”

“Have you got a dress she can go in?”

“A dress, Mr. Murray!”

“She cannot go in a series of furbelows, like that in which she appears to-day. We are going to be *children*, up on Eagle Hill, Mrs. McAllister; we must dress accordingly. I can’t take any hoops or flounces; something strong and plain is the only wear for the huckleberry bushes.”

“She wont pick many berries; she never does.”

“She’ll have to help get the dinner, though, — *if* we go,” added Mr. Murray, in an amused sort of concession to himself. “Can’t you let your woman cut her out and make her to-

morrow a suit of blue check, or brown linen, or homespun, or whatever it may be; in which the child could live a real life for two or three days?"

"*Homespun!*" screamed Mrs. Candlish; and "*Two or three days!*" cried Mrs. McAlister.

"I shall not go for less. Why yes, sister, homespun or anything. Cut up some of your towels."

The children came rushing back at this minute, out of breath with the announcement that Mrs. Ponsonby said she would go to the moon, if Mr. Murray would assure her that it was cool there.

"I can't," said Mr. Murray. "I don't know anything about it. And I shouldn't recommend the excursion, even if I knew how to go. The moon looks very unpromising for a summer residence."

"But you'll go, — we'll go, — to Eagle Hill, sha'n't we, uncle Eden?" said the bewildered children.

"Come here, and let us arrange preliminaries. Sit down and be quiet; it's too exhausting to talk fast. Now *when* shall we go?"

There was a general cry of "To-morrow!"

"We are not ready. I could not get my part ready for to-morrow. We should want to set off by nine or ten o'clock; *nine* is the latest. It must be day after to-morrow."

"Thursday! Well, uncle Eden?"

"You'll all have to sleep on the ground in one little tent; except Fenton; and he will have a corner of my cloak under the stars."

Fenton bridled and looked round at this, feeling evidently a taller and older boy than ever yet.

"But suppose it rains, Mr. Murray?" said Mrs. McAllister.

"In that case we'll do as well as the soldiers do. I have a little shelter tent."

"Aren't you afraid to risk Fenton's catching his death of cold?" said the lady turning to Fenton's mother.

“ I have to risk a great many things,” said Mrs. Candlish laughing. “ When you are the mother of boys you will understand that. Besides, I never interfere with Mr. Murray.”

“ Well, uncle Eden ? ” said Esther. “ We don’t mind how we sleep.”

“ You and the rest must undertake setting tables and washing dishes — all that is done.”

“ Shall we have a table ? ” inquired Esther, looking puzzled.

“ The primitive kind. A rock, or the ground. But what of that ? It must be set, or how can we eat our dinners and breakfasts ? ”

“ Breakfasts — to be sure,” repeated Esther dubiously. “ I was thinking how we do when we go on a pic nic ; we eat from our fingers.”

“ But this isn’t a pic nic.”

“ No.”

“ And we must have things in order. I expect clean plates and cups.”

“O yes, uncle Eden. We will wash them.”

“You may have to help prepare dinner.”

“O I’d like that!” said Esther, flushing with delight.

“First rate,” added Fenton. “Wont you catch some fish, uncle Eden? and let me help you *get* the dinner?”

“The savage arrangement,” said Mr. Murray looking up at the ladies; “do you see how nature manifests itself. Sport for the man; labour for the woman. I may ask you to cook the fish when they are caught, Fenton.”

“Well sir, — I’d like that too.”

“Cooking our dinner!” repeated Esther, jumping about in her glee; “how delightful. O, uncle Eden, how good you are!”

“Hope the dinners will be,” said Mr. Murray. “Do you see, ladies, the mistake you make when you fancy children can be pleased with none but childish things? The very acme of enjoyment is to get hold of some real work, or what seems to them such.”

“But our servants do our *work*, Mr. Murray,” objected Mrs. McAllister.

“Yes!” said the gentleman, “I know it. We have got a good way from the simplicity of natural arrangements. Adam would have thought himself miserably off in the garden of Eden, if he had been instructed in modern proprieties.”

“But really, Mr. Murray,” said the lady, “don’t you see any difference?”

“Between — ?” said Mr. Murray expectantly.

“Between Adam’s condition and ours?”

“Certainly. That is what I said.”

“But if every man did his own work, Mr. Murray, — ”

“And kept no servants.”

“And kept no servants, — what would become of civilization? and science? and art? and literature?”

“And luxury?”

“Well, yes; and luxury. Don’t you like luxury, Mr. Murray?”

“I like it; yes. I don’t like to pay too high a price for it.”

“But you have money enough.”

“I don’t mean money. And there are different sorts of luxury, I would have you to know. I am enjoying one sort at present, which costs nobody anything.”

“What does my sort of luxury cost?” asked the lady curiously.

“What would startle you if you knew it,” said the gentleman, rolling himself over on the turfy bank and looking up at his audience; four impatient children, and two slightly impatient women. Mr. Candlish was smoking a cigar in cool attention.

“What would startle you if you knew it,” Mr. Murray repeated. “Your luxury cannot be had without the growth of cities; and cities cannot subsist without poverty, oppression, vice, the cry of the hungry, the groan of the wronged. I can tell you, the luxury that cities make possible, is a scruple in the pound of what they make impossible.”

“Why Mr. Murray!” said the lady; “you talk like a Communist. And you talk as if cities were bad things.”

“So they are,” said Mr. Murray. “Cain’s children were the first to build them.”

“Perhaps I am one of Cain’s children,” said the lady tittering.

“Hardly!” said Mr. Eden, the gleam of his teeth again becoming visible. “There is history against that. Well, Mrs. Candlish’s children — to come back to you — one thing more. I give it to you in charge to arrange and make out a list of all the things we shall want on the mountain.”

“O yes, sir!” and “Yes, uncle Eden,” — came in chorus; then, “But don’t you think we had better shew you our list, uncle Eden, before the things are packed up?”

“I should think so.”

“Because we might forget something.”

“Uncle Eden, who’ll carry the things? There must be somebody to carry them,” Fenton remarked.

“ I’ll provide somebody to carry them.”

“ But *you* can’t take them, sir. There’ll be more, a great *deal* more, than you could take at once ; or you and I too.”

“ I expect there will. You shall not have much to burden you, Fenton ; you know you must have a hand free to help Esther and Josie.”

“ They can climb as well as I can,” said Fenton sturdily.

“ Savage arrangement again,” said Mr. Murray. “ Well go, and make your calculations, and let me know by to-morrow, luncheon time, what you have concluded upon.”

CHAPTER III.

NOTHING could be done that evening. The children's tea came, and then bed. Next morning however, after breakfast, four camp chairs might have been seen in a group under the shade of the ash-leaved maple, and four little heads clustered there together. The sun was already beating down sultrily upon the world, promising another day like the day gone; though the big round maple at the foot of the lawn cast yet an oblong shadow towards the west, and dew still hung on the roses and honeysuckles, and the river was full of curves and wavelets from the paddle-wheels of the "Jane Frazier," just gone by, and she went by at eight. It was not what you might call cool anywhere; under the ash-maple there was a little freshness and a dense shade.

"It's nice here," said Maggie.

"It'll be nicer when we are on the hill," said Fenton. "Now then we must get on with our business. I've got a pencil and paper, Esther; I'll make the list."

"I'll make one too. It's no harm to have another."

"And no use either. What's the good of *two* lists? Put yours away."

"I like to make one too, Fenton. It's no harm if we have more than one. I want one for myself."

"Then if Fenton loses his, you'll have yours," remarked Maggie comfortably.

Whereupon Fenton in disgust put up his pencil and left the committee.

"He'll come back again," said Josie. "We'd better go on and put down all we can think of; because there is a great deal to think of. What are we going to sleep on? Will there be beds?"

"We can't sleep on the huckleberry bushes," said Esther; and there was a great and

gleeful laugh at this conceit. "I think we *must* have beds of some sort. Of course, Uncle Eden wouldn't have us sleep on the ground."

"What sort?"

"I don't know. The only sort of beds I know are feather beds and straw beds and hair mattresses. But feather beds wouldn't do; and I don't believe we can get hair mattresses up the hill. They are *very* heavy."

"We couldn't sleep on straw beds," said Josie.

The dilemma was grave. And the amount of knowledge in the little conclave was not enough to remove it. They could only conclude that "beds" must be the first article on the list; and leave ways and measures to the older heads.

"Will the beds lie on the ground?" Josie asked next.

"They must. O, we can't take bedsteads along, I am sure. It's as rough as anything, going up the mountain."

"How, 'rough?' " Josie wanted to know.

"Well, rocks, you know; and stones; and it's steep, and full of trees and bushes."

"What, the road?"

"O there's no road. No regular road. You just climb and scramble."

"Will that be pleasant?"

"O yes, I think it's delightful. Of course, nothing will be *too* hard with uncle Eden. He will take care of that. Now what is the next thing?"

"Shall we take trunks?"

"Trunks? I guess not. I am sure not. Who'd carry them up, you know?"

"Then what shall we keep our things in?"

"I don't believe we'll take much," said Esther shaking her head. "Just one frock, you know, and a nightgown."

Josie looked in amaze at the idea of such a very scant wardrobe.

"Mamma and aunt Patty will see to that. What we have to do, is the list of things for uncle Eden."

"We shall want a table," said Josie, "to eat dinner on."

Esther shook her head again. "We'll just spread a tablecloth on the grass, or on some rock; that'll do nicely."

"I shouldn't think it would do nicely," said Josie. "Rocks are dirty."

"O no, they aren't. Our rocks are lovely and clean. The lichen is clean, you know."

"What's the lichen?"

"Don't you know? O you'll see. Something that grows on the rock."

"Nothing can grow on *rocks*," said Josie.

"Yes, it does; you'll see. Some of it's beautiful, too; I'll shew you."

"Shall we take chairs?"

"O no. Sit on the ground, or on any thing. We can take only things that we *must* have, Josie."

"Mayn't I take Fanny Elizabeth?" inquired Maggie. Now Fanny Elizabeth was a doll of goodly size and proportions and extensive wardrobe.

"I don't believe you'll want her, dear," said Esther, who was matronly towards her little sister.

"O yes, I do! She'll not be in the way."

"We shall have to go up such a high hill, Maggie, and so rough; and I guess you'll want help yourself."

"But at the top, I shall want her," said Maggie.

"Well, dear, you just ask Betsey, or aunt Patty, and she'll tell you. Now Josie, we've got to see about just what things we *must* have."

"Why don't you choose?" said Maggie. "You choose, and Josie choose, and I choose; every one take what they like. I choose Fanny Elizabeth."

"What will you do when it comes to dinner time?" asked Esther; "what will you eat out of?"

"I'll take a cup and a spoon, and a plate, and some huckleberries and milk."

"Well, let's each take a cup and a spoon

and a plate," said Josie; "and a knife and fork, and a napkin."

Esther carefully wrote these articles down.

"We shall not want mats," she said, "for we shall have no hot dishes, I guess; and the hot dishes wouldn't hurt any thing if we had 'em. O, I wish uncle Eden would stay a real long time up on the hill,—days and days, you know!—and we would live and make out all sorts of ways. Wouldn't it be delightful?"

Josie did not seem quite so sure of this; and presently asked, what they should take to eat?

"That's another thing," said Esther. "I'll put down bread, of course; and butter; and milk; and uncle Eden will want coffee, I suppose. And some chickens, I guess; wouldn't that be the best thing, Josie?"

"I don't know," said Josie. "I don't care—if we can get huckleberries. But I think we had better take some pies."

"Pies?" said Esther. "What sort?"

"Meringue. And custard. I don't care for the rest of the dinner, if I can get meringue pies."

"Mamma don't let me have 'em," said Esther doubtfully; "only a very little bit now and then. But I'll put 'em down. Now, is that all?"

"We'll want some baskets," suggested Maggie, who had listened with great attention; "to pick huckleberries in, you know. And you didn't say milk."

These things were obvious, and put down. Somehow, from this point the conversation diverged; and all three little heads had forgotten Eagle Hill and the lists of things and all about them; when suddenly Fenton came back on a run and dashed into the group and his camp chair simultaneously.

"Do you want to see my list?" he said, all flushed with his speed.

"I've been making mine," said his sister; "or we have."

"Go ahead," said Fenton; "but see first

if I haven't got everything you've got. The first thing is baskets, — ”

“ That's what I said ! ” cried Maggie.

“ And in the baskets will go all our traps that must be packed up. The first thing is bait, and our hooks and lines ; we have got to catch fish to live upon, you know.”

“ We're going to take chickens,” said Esther.

“ Chickens ! ” said Fenton scornfully ; “ girls can't get along without chickens. We are going to live upon fish, I tell you.”

“ *I can't,*” said Josie. “ *I can't bear fish.*”

“ You'd better stay at home then,” said Fenton. “ When people go into the woods, they've got to live wild. It's first rate too, I tell you.”

“ But where are you to catch your fish, Fen ? ” said his sister. “ The river will be away down ever so far below us ; out of reach.”

“ Of course I know that ! ” said Fenton superbly.

“Where will your fish come from then?”

“There are more fish than swim in this river,” said Fenton. “Don’t you know, the fish of Birch Lake are famous? Famous they are. Did you never hear of Birch Lake pickerel?”

“Where is Birch Lake?”

“Never mind; you’ll see where it is. We’re going there. So our lines and bait must be the first thing in the baskets, for fear they should be forgotten. Next comes the tent.”

“In the baskets?” said Esther.

“Of course not!—on my list. The tent, and a piece of carpet.”

“What is the carpet for?”

“Why, to put inside the tent. Don’t you know the Arabs, when they are rich enough, spread carpets on the ground inside their tents?”

“We are not Arabs,” said Josie.

“We’re going to live in tents, though, and may as well follow the whole fashion. Cush-

ions *they* would lay on the carpets. I am afraid we can't ; that's the worst of it."

" And then, do they sit down on the cushions? "

" No ! They sit down on the carpet, and lean upon the cushions. "

" What a queer way," said Josie.

" Well, they would think our chairs and tables just as queer. Don't you know, Josie McAllister, or haven't you learned, that all the countries have their own ways. "

" Our way is the best," said Josie. .

" Not for living in tents ; no, it isn't ; that's just where you're out. We'll have to do with the carpet and no cushions, though ; for in the first place we haven't got 'em, and in the second place, it would be such an awful job to get 'em to the top of the hill. The next thing on my list is plates and knives. "

" O I've got those down, Fenton ! "

" And tumblers ? And a dipper ? "

" What for ? "

“To get water with — out of the spring.”

“I never thought of that.”

“Then, bread and butter; and some meat, I suppose, to begin with. And an umbrella.”

“An umbrella!” said Esther.

“Yes, to sit under at dinner; when the sun’s pouring down like blazes.”

“We can’t all get under one umbrella,” remarked Josie.

“Well, you needn’t if you don’t want to,” said Fenton. “You’ve got the tent.”

“I shouldn’t think the boy of the party would be the one to want the umbrella,” said Esther.

“Why not?” said Fenton hotly; “why should a boy be roasted alive any more than a girl? Stuff!”

“But if only part can be comfortable, it ought to be the girls,” returned Esther.

“Why?”

“That’s always the way with a gentleman. He makes other people comfortable first.”

“And how does a lady do?”

“She is the one to be *made* comfortable.”

“That’s a ridiculous way,” said Fenton.

“There’s no sense in it.”

“There is politeness,” said Esther bridling.

“Well, I can tell you, when people camp out and live in tents, they don’t keep all that up.”

“Uncle Eden will keep it up,” said Esther.

“Then,” said Fenton, going on from that subject, “we shall want a hatchet; to break up wood and kindling for our fires.”

“Fires? we don’t want fire, in this weather, do we?” said Josie. “Is it so cold up there?”

“Cold! I guess not,” said Fenton. “Not exactly. But we must have a fire to cook our fish.”

“I don’t care if you don’t,” said Josie. “I don’t want to see any fish, cooked or uncooked.”

“What do you expect to live on?” said Fenton. Then, shouting as he saw Mr. Murray passing by, “Uncle Eden! we’ve got our lists ready.”

“I have not made mine,” said Mr. Murray. “After lunch is the time. Always do business in business hours.”

“I should think *morning* was business hours,” muttered Fenton.

“Not when afternoon is appointed for it,” remarked Esther.

“I should think girls knew every thing about business!” was Fenton’s rejoinder; and he flung away from them to pursue his own devices till luncheon time. It was getting hot under the trees; and the little girls went in to hold consultations with Betsey.

After luncheon, and Mr. Murray did not hasten his, though Esther eat without knowing what she tasted, the lists were called for. Esther’s ran on this wise. —

“1. *Beds!* What sort?” asked Mr. Murray.

“Beds !” repeated Fenton. “Such a ridiculous idea.”

“I did not say so. What sort of beds does this list contemplate, Essie ?”

“Uncle Eden — we thought we must have *something* to sleep on.”

“Certainly. What did you mean it to be ?”

“We were puzzled about that. I couldn’t make it out exactly. But we couldn’t sleep just on the bare ground, uncle Eden.”

“That’s what I said” — began Fenton eagerly.

“Hush ! Your turn will come. Let Esther explain herself.”

“Uncle Eden, I don’t know. You’ll have to explain. I thought we must have something to sleep on ; and I couldn’t think of anything but beds.”

“I said *carpets*,” put in Fenton.

“We could not transport mattresses up to the top of the hill, Essie, could we ? I do not wonder you were puzzled. But if you

will leave that to me, I will engage that you shall have as nice a bed as ever you slept on. It is up there already, the material; it only wants making. We'll leave that. What next on this list?"

"'Cups, spoons, plates, napkins, knives and forks, table-cloth,' — Very good. All right, so far; only I think the table-cloth would be superfluous."

"What's superfl — ?" asked Maggie.

"Over and above what is wanted, Maggie. We must just set our cups and plates on the rocks or the ground, wherever we can; and lay no crumbe cloth nor table-cloth either. 'Bread, butter, milk, coffee;' — all needful. 'Chickens,' h'm, — no harm. 'Pies,' — whose notion is that? They are very inconvenient things to pack, Essie; and not very good, made into a jam."

"Josie thought she'd like 'em. I don't care."

"We can get along a day or two without pies. We'll try. 'Baskets' — those are

very necessary. Is that all you think we shall want ? ”

“ Here’s my list, sir,” said Fenton before Esther could answer. Mr. Murray took it.

“ ‘ Baskets ’ — ‘ bait, and hooks and lines ’ ; very good, Fenton ; we shall want the hooks and lines ; but I *think* I can find bait somewhere on Eagle Hill.”

“ But in this dry weather it’s very difficult, uncle Eden.”

“ Specially, if you don’t know where to look. ‘ Tent.’ — Yes, two tents. I’ll take my little shelter tent, in case a rain shower comes up a little *too* heavy. ‘ Piece of carpet ’ — what for ? ”

“ To spread in the tent, sir, as the Arabs do.”

“ H’m. Very comfortable. We must see if we can get it up. I don’t know. ‘ Plates and knives ’ — we’ve got those things agreed upon already. ‘ Tumblers ’ — no, we can drink out of our cups, can’t we ? and strike off the tumblers. ‘ Dipper ’ — no harm.

‘Bread and butter, and meat.’ — ‘Umbrella.’
Ha! what for that, my boy?”

“When it is so awful hot — in the middle of the day, you know.”

“Yes — when it is so hot — what then?”

“I thought I’d like an umbrella.”

“What for?”

“Why, for *shade*, sir.”

“Over your own head?”

“Yes, sir.”

“You are young, so we will let this pass as owing to want of thought and experience. Don’t you know, my boy, a gentleman thinks of everybody else before himself? especially of those who are weaker and more delicate than himself?”

“Then who thinks of him?” inquired Fenton bluntly.

“There is always somebody,” remarked Mrs. Candlish dryly.

“Mamma, does papa do so?” asked the boy audaciously.

“I am astonished at you, Fenton! to ap-

peal to me from your uncle. You ought to know that there is no possible higher authority than his, in such matters."

Fenton pouted, not rudely, only in a disconcerted sort of way.

"An umbrella, Fenton," his uncle went on, "is one of the most tiresome companions, in my experience; troublesome to go along with, and very troublesome to forget. Moreover, in the wild country where we are going we shall find some trees, which will be a more natural shade, don't you think so? and cover all the party. 'A hatchet;' that's a prudent thought. But is this the end?" said Mr. Murray turning over the slip of paper. "That's *all* we want, think you?"

"What else, uncle Eden?" said Esther.

"So much, that it takes away my breath. How are we going to make tea?"

"Why, Fenton said we would have fires."

"And boil the water — how?"

"Oh! — we must have a kettle."

“What do you think about a cup of tea without sugar?”

“But you know *we* don’t drink tea, uncle Eden. I forgot to put down sugar. I didn’t think about it.”

“And what will our fish be without salt?”

“O we don’t know anything about cooking, you see, uncle Eden.”

“And how can we light our fire without matches? And how can we sleep at night without blankets, or coverings of some sort?”

“I never thought of matches! But blankets! — uncle Eden, our blankets are all packed away in camphor, in the big chests in the attic.”

“Can’t be got out?”

“Why yes; but we couldn’t sleep under them.”

“You’ll be too glad. Eagle Hill isn’t like Mosswood, at any time of year, I can tell you.”

“I don’t like to hear the word blanket!” said Mrs. Candlish, fanning herself languidly.

“If I could bear tent life, I’d go along with you.”

“I think I will go,” said Mrs. Ponsonby.

At this there was a great shout of delight from the children.

“Well, you may go,” said her brother ; “but only as a guest. I have stipulated that the young ones and I are to do the work. Betsey will take care of odds and ends. You shall enjoy the prospect and your cup of tea.”

“If I go, I shall not take Betsey,” said Mrs. Ponsonby. “And I would like to go, right well.”

The rest of that day, I give you my word, was busy. Betsey said she didn’t know where her wits were. Mrs. Ponsonby was invisible and of no use to society. The children, with the prospect of being cool on the mountain, made themselves as hot as possible now ; packing baskets, digging bait, running between the kitchen and their own dressing-room. So much was going on. Even Mr.

Murray was certainly busy ; though it was after the cool, un-hurried fashion in which he did everything. And then the children watched the sunset.

“ There are little specks of clouds over Eagle Hill,” said Essie ; “ *little* specks. Do they mean anything, uncle Eden ? ”

“ I don’t think they mean anything. The colours upon them do, perhaps.”

“ What do those mean ? ”

“ Fair weather.”

“ Aren’t they pretty ! But the other night you said, — when there was a bank of cloud in the south, — you said it meant bad weather. And it did ; for next day it rained.”

“ Quite right, Essie ; but note the differences. That was a low-lying grey bank ; these are little broken racks of vapour. That was a dull grey ; and these look as if a rainbow had been broken somewhere in their neighbourhood and spilled all over them.”

“ But why should a grey cloud mean rain, and a coloured cloud mean sunshine ? ”

“That is a question, Essie, I am unable to answer. I suppose, when the cloud is grey, it shews that other clouds are beyond, heavy enough to interrupt the rays of the sun. But why *that* should mean rain, I am unable to tell you.”

“Would a cloud in the east mean anything?”

“Nothing in the world.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE morning broke with no clouds anywhere. Not even little racks of vapour were to be found in the whole blue expanse of the sky, to catch and throw back the sun's golden largesses. Clear and bright and strong, the sun rose from behind the barrier of eastern hills, promising to the weather-wise a blazing day. But the children declared it was cool and delightful.

Nevertheless, they had better go as soon as they were all ready, uncle Eden said; and when breakfast was over there was a great rush of business. The wheelbarrow was brought to the front door; and first the great bundle of canvass, which was really a folded-up tent, was sent down to the boat. Then two large covered baskets. Then a portmanteau and carpet bag.

"You'll be dreadfully tired of your bargain, Eden," remarked Mrs. Candlish, as they all stood at the front door.

"Is that the fate that overtakes your bargains?" said the gentleman lightly.

"I never make such wild ones."

"So you see you are not a competent judge."

"I know what you will say, though, when you get to the top of the hill."

"I don't," said Mr. Murray laughing. "Now, children — where are you?"

"Here, uncle Eden," sounded in various tones of happy voices. "But you haven't sent any tent poles; where are your tent poles?"

"Up on the hill."

"O! — you'll cut them. That's a very good way. But the tent pins, uncle Eden?"

"Wrapped up in the tent bundle; and the hatchet likewise. Now, have you all got thick shoes? Yours will not do, Josie."

"Thicker than *these*, must I have?" asked

Josie disconsolately. "They're so hot, and so heavy!"

"Never mind. Only trifles, Josie. Your feet cannot stand rocks and stones all day without protection. Borrow a pair of Essie's — if you have none but fashionable foot gear."

"One would think you thought there was something wrong in the word fashionable," said Josie's mother, while the little girls ran off.

"The word's right enough; it's the *thing*."

"What about the thing, Mr. Murray?"

"I always find it in the way when the question is about being useful."

"Uncle Eden, don't we want a pail, to get water in from the spring?"

"It's in the boat, Fenton."

"Your boat must be a curiosity," said Mrs. McAllister.

"Matches, have you got, uncle Eden?"

"Yes; and a small grocery store."

"O! and a frying pan?"

“Frying pan, gridiron and tea kettle. Come, young ones. Mrs. Ponsonby, we wait for you.

“ ‘ Farewell, happy fields ! ’ —

“ We are off for happier mountain tops.”

It was quite a boat load indeed that finally pushed off from the boat-house dock ; and as Mrs. McAllister had hinted, something of a curiosity. Four very happy children amidships, with faces of eager bright enterprise ; two men at the oars ; at prow and stern and everywhere between, baskets and bundles and travelling gear. At the rudder sat Mr. Murray with his usual calm face of business, and beside him his sister, in a linen dress and white sunbonnet and thick gloves ; all betokened a serious expedition.

It was early yet. Forethought and system had so arranged and prepared things, that it was but half past eight when the oars were dipped into the water. The sun was very bright ! Mrs. Ponsonby pulled her deep bonnet further forward to shield her face and

eyes from the glare. Yet the plash of the oars sounded a liquid denial that all the world was parched up ; little wavelets carried a fresh sparkle to the shore, and gurgled softly among the rushes ; and as the boat crept round the rocks of Mosswood and the river opened more to the north, there was even a faint suspicion of air stirring. The men pulled steadily, gently ; it was no weather for violent exertion.

As long as the boat could, she kept in the narrow strip of shadow under the Mosswood rocks ; but it was necessary to cross the river in order to get under Eagle hill ; and the river here was broad. And now, crossing the river, the sun grew hot ; very hot.

“ It is stifling,” said Mrs. Ponsonby.

“ It will be, in the centre of Mosswood,” said her brother.

“ Not where we are going ? ”

“ No.”

“ I am very glad of it.”

“ I wont answer for all the way thither,

mind ; though I think even that will be bearable."

"The sight of water is something," said Mrs. Ponsonby, "when one can get rid of the reflection."

"O Josie!" said Esther ecstatically; "isn't it splendid? O wouldn't you like to be going, going, always somewhere; and seeing things; and never staying long in a place?"

"*This* is pleasant," said Josie, dipping her fingers in the warm water as the boat sped on. "I don't like hotels much. *That's* where we are when mamma goes away from home."

"What is it like?" Esther asked.

"Don't you know what a hotel is?" said Fenton scornfully. "I wouldn't tell it, if I were you."

"I know what it *is*," said Esther; "but I don't know what it is *like*."

"It's like a cow pasture!" cried Fenton.

"For shame, Fenton! why?"

"That's for you to find out. *Why* is

it like a cow pasture? That's a conundrum."

"I guess you made it up yourself," said Esther. "I never heard it before. I guess it's nonsense."

"I don't know what hotels are like," said Josie. "Fenton's conundrum is very inelegant, I think. I'll tell you, Essie; they are very hot, and there's a great crowd of people, and a great deal of fuss, and no nice place to be comfortable. Not for me; there is for mamma, of course; but there is nothing to do unless you play croquet; and you can't *always* play croquet."

"Croquet is very nice," said Esther doubtfully. "But it isn't as nice as this, is it?"

"Josie hasn't told the whole," said Fenton. "I'll tell you something else there is in a hotel; — there's a *bar-place*."

There was a little giggling over this; and then the boat began to draw near the green wooded slopes of the mountain. Thick with green leafage, although that August sun had

done so much to embrown them ; oaks and maples and hickory and chestnut and ash clustered together to clothe and hide the rocky walls and broken, stony, and rocky slopes of the hill ; with here and there a tall cone of deep green where a hemlock rose up among its lighter companions, or a bunch of soft cool blue tints where a group of white pines stood with their heads together. At the edge of the water there was a little strip of gravelly beach, strewn with boulders ; a very little strip ; above it the thick woods and the high steep hill side.

“ Where’s the path, uncle Eden ? ” asked Esther.

“ How are we going to get up ? ” Fenton called out. “ There’s no opening.”

“ We shall not get up where there is no opening,” said his uncle.

“ It’s as tight as — a hedge,” said Fenton, surveying the woody slope, “ and as high as an uncommonly high castle. I shouldn’t like to be a rabbit and have my home somewhere

between the bottom and the top of that mountain. I say! wouldn't he have a time of it, to get a living?"

"Rabbits don't live in such places," said Esther.

"How do you know?"

"I don't think they do. They burrow, you know; they make holes in the ground. Now they *couldn't* burrow in such a rocky place."

"I should think holes in the ground would be awfully jolly in this weather," said Fenton. "Phew!—How *will* we ever climb up yonder?"

Slowly meanwhile the little boat coasted along under the hill, passing the varied foliage of trees and young saplings that seemed mutely crying or waiting for the refreshment of rain, so still they stood under the fierce shine of the sun's rays; past rocks where the lichens were all grey and shrivelled up, where the mosses were dry and brown. Scarce a flower to be seen. The sun was

beating down hotter and hotter upon the river and against the hillside.

"I hope you'll come to your stopping place soon, Eden," said Mrs. Ponsonby. "This is getting fearful."

"Must endure a little hardship in the pursuit of pleasure," returned Mr. Murray.

"Pleasure!" echoed his sister; and then her eye fell upon the four young ones in the boat, and she said no more; except to ask,

"Aren't you hot, Essie, my dear?"

"O yes, aunt Patty; but it's delightful!"

"Maggie?"

"O I'm not hot at all!"

"I give it up!" said Mrs. Ponsonby; and then turning round one little rocky point more, the boat came where there was a gap in the trees. A very small matter of a gap; only just down by the water's edge the beginning of a rough road was visible. It ran up hill and was immediately embowered and covered up by the branches of maple, oak and

chestnut and dogwood that overlapped and interlaced above it.

Mr. Murray ran the boat ashore. One of the boatmen jumped out and held it fast, while the other man, standing on the wet stones, landed the children. There was no way but for each to make a great leap from the prow of the boat to the dry part of the beach; but with thick shoes and good power of leaping this was easily done. Then Mr. Murray handed out baskets and luggage. Meanwhile the children ran up into the entrance of the bowery road.

"It's awfully steep!" said Josie slowly, surveying all of it that was visible.

"*I don't care,*" responded Fenton.

"Is it all rough like this?"

"I dare say it is. It aint much of a road, anyhow; only some woodmen made it, uncle Eden says, to bring wood down that they cut on the mountain."

"Is it long?" asked Josie, standing appalled before the steep inclined plane, covered

with loose stones, of which only a few yards as yet could be seen.

“Long? why of course it’s long; it goes all the way up to the top of the mountain. If you didn’t want rough walking, you shouldn’t have come to this shop.”

“Aren’t you afraid?” whispered Josie to Esther.

“Afraid? Of what?”

“Of going up there: Don’t you think we’ll be tired to death?”

“O I dare say we’ll be *some* tired,” said Esther cheerfully; “but then we’ll rest on the top, you know, and see all the world a’most. O I like it, ever so much.”

Josie concluded she would like it too; and watched with curiosity the arrangements making by Mr. Murray. The canvass, baskets, carpet roll, portmanteau, tea kettle and water pail, blankets and rugs, and I don’t know what besides, were securely packed upon a kind of rude sled, and tied fast. The two men then laid hold of ropes attached to

the forward end of the sled and began to haul it up the steep gravelly slope. The rest of the party went on ahead ; but nearly every one had something to carry. Josie took the water dipper. Esther carried a basket with the knives and forks and spoons and napkins. Maggie was burdened and happy with Fanny Elizabeth. Fenton had another basket containing tea and sugar and stores. Nobody knew what was in Mrs. Ponsonby's basket. And Mr. Murray said he was the most important person in the party, for he had the bread. Sometimes, too, he put it down on the sled and took a turn at the ropes.

The road did not belie its first promise. It went steeply up the mountain, rounding it a little, but very steep indeed ; as heavy a pitch as horses could well work upon. Very rough it was under foot, too ; it had never been used enough to beat or break it into a little smoothness. Rather the feet of the horses and the drag of the timbers and trees

hauled down, had cut and ploughed it. All that could be said was, that it was a way, an open one, and on the whole practicable ; whereas the rest of the mountain was a wilderness of rock and wood and undergrowth, where undergrowth had room ; for in places the smooth granite made a straight up-and-down wall, that gave nothing but lichens any chance, except perhaps a tuft of brackens here and there. Little could be seen of this from the roadway, for along that slope the trees grew close and the underbrush was thick and luxuriant. So the party were shielded in great measure from the heat of the sun. But that did not hinder it from being stifflingly hot. There was no air. The leaves hung motionless on the trees ; not a twig stirred. The birds were hushed. No shadows came over. And the strain up the hill was toilsome and incessant. Even the little feet went slowly at last ; and the elder kept a very gentle, though steady rate of motion. Down below them, the two men

hauled upon the sled ropes, and stopped often to pant and to wipe their dripping faces.

"Uncle Eden," said Esther in a subdued tone of voice, "where is the top of the road?"

"Somewhere above us, Essie, as yet."

"Uncle Eden," broke out Fenton, who had been very steadily plodding upward with his basket, "what is the use of mountains?"

"You would like it better if all the world were flat meadows?"

Fenton considered that proposition.

"No sir — I don't think I should."

"Then one purpose of mountains, it seems, is to give us pleasure."

"But they have no other use, have they?"

"Let us sit down," said Mr. Murray; "to climb a mountain and to philosophize about it, are too much at once in such weather!"

So they clustered about him, making seats of such stones and rocks as they could find. Below they could hear the grating of the sled over the stones and gravel as the labori-

ous efforts of the two men drew it upward ; but nothing was in sight. Nothing, that is, but trees close by, and through the stems of them another sloping green hillside that rose on the opposite side of a narrow valley to the north. Powerful sunlight out there ; within the woody road a chequered and shaded portion of the same. Flushed faces ; tired feet ; baskets willingly deposited on the ground.

“ Is there any water hereabouts, uncle Eden ? ” asked Fenton.

“ Not a drop, till we get to the top of the mountain. You must wait, my boy.”

“ Well, what is the use of mountains anyhow ? ” said Fenton disconsolately.

“ That,” said Mr. Murray.

“ What, sir ? ”

“ Water. The supply of water, I mean.”

“ Why you say there is none up here.”

“ Just at this spot. And but for mountains and hills there would be none on the low ground. None, that is, except oceans and lakes, and here and there a sluggish river, perhaps.”

“There would be brooks and springs?”

“No, there wouldn’t.”

“Why not, sir?”

“Surface springs come through a crooked channel from some reservoir higher than themselves. And a brook that can’t run down hill, — what is it?”

“A pond?”

“You must have a hollow for a pond. No, it loses itself and becomes a marsh.”

“But uncle Eden, ground might be higher in one place than in another, without having a hill.”

“It might; but without hills and mountains you could not have the beginnings of springs and brooks. Rain would fall equally on the whole country, and be drained off or dried off, according to the soil and surface, pretty equally; and there would be the end of it.”

“And what do the mountains do?”

“Stop the clouds and catch the rain, in greater quantity than elsewhere, in the first

place; and then, the rapid drainage soon fills reservoirs and sends streams down to the low country."

Fenton turned this over in his mind, and Esther looked with new respect at the opposite hill.

"Do you think *everything* is good for something, sir?"

"I am convinced of it. In most cases, good for a great many things."

"What is the use of snakes? I saw one just now."

Mr. Murray laughed.

"In talking with you, Fenton, I am reminded of the wise man's caution about the beginning of strife, — it is 'as one letteth out water'; difficult to stop when once set a going. However, I should say, that the use of snakes is to shew us how sin looks in God's sight."

"How?" said Fenton.

"Ugly — cunning — mean — venomous — insinuating — deadly."

“So we ought to kill sin as we kill snakes?”

“You cannot.”

“Can’t I?” said Fenton.

“No.”

“Then I am not to blame for what I can’t help,” said Fenton again, straightening himself up.

Mr. Murray laughed again.

“The snake’s head shewed itself there, Fenton; insinuating, and wily, in defence of evil. You cannot help doing wrong, just for this reason; that you are not *willing* to help it.”

“Yes sir, but I *am* willing.”

“Till the temptation comes. Are you willing then?”

Some recent experience, it seemed, closed the lips of Fenton; but Esther, who had listened narrowly, now spoke.

“I know that’s true. Then how *are* we to do, uncle Eden?”

“Give ourselves to Jesus. He is the

Captain of our salvation; he will bring us through."

"And will he really keep us from doing wrong?"

"If we really give ourselves to him, and if we trust him. He is the 'seed of the woman' that was to bruise the serpent's head, you know. The devil is a conquered enemy, for those who belong to Jesus."

"Where is the devil now?" said Fenton abruptly.

Mr. Murray's lips worked, but he answered with profound gravity.

"I think he is whispering to you."

The girls tittered, but Fenton flushed and answered rather hotly, "Why, sir?"

"I think he suggested to you just then that he was not exactly a *conquered* enemy, but abroad and doing his will."

"Well, isn't he?" said Fenton rather doggedly.

"Yes, in his own dominions he is; but those who belong to the Great King are out of his power."

“Who is *in* his power, uncle Eden?” Esther asked. “Wicked people, I suppose?”

“Everybody, Essie; everybody; *except* those whom the Great King has set free and brought under his own power.”

“*Me*, uncle Eden?” said Essie wistfully. And Mr. Murray looked at the fair little face and did not answer for a moment.

“When any one comes to Jesus and begins in good earnest to follow him, Essie, one of the things that are true about him is this, —that he is turned ‘from the power of Satan to God;’ brought ‘out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of God’s dear Son.’”

“And till they are brought into that kingdom, they are all in the other?”

“Yes.”

“Then why does God let the devil be about?” Josie asked with curiosity.

“I do not know. Perhaps that the soldiers of Jesus may have some work to do for him,

and some fighting, and that they may know the blessedness of their deliverance and the greatness of their Deliverer. But it is only for a time. By and by Satan will be cast out and put down for ever."

"I don't like religion," said Josie.

"Why not?" Mr. Murray asked gravely.

"It isn't interesting. Mamma thinks so too."

"I am afraid you have looked at it from the wrong side. Do you think we can take the rest of this hill now?"

The sled had caught up with them, and they all arose to resume their straggling climb of the wood road. The way did not grow easy as they went on; rather it roughened. The road became less marked towards its upper end. Sometimes there was a confusion of cut branches, lying as they had been lopped from the trees. It was very troublesome, getting through these; but as Mr. Murray remarked, they would furnish fuel with little more labour than the fetching.

At last the woods ahead seemed to thin out ; light shewed through, and blue sky ; and in a little more the headmost of the party, who were Fenton and Esther, emerged upon the open mountain top.

“Hollo !” cried Fenton, throwing up his cap, “it’s glorious ! And it ain’t hot a bit up here.”

“O aunt Patty !” Esther cried, “it’s so pretty !”

Both declarations proved to be true. Getting out from the shelter of the woods, the party stood at the outer border of a broad open space, the whole brow of the mountain, in fact, from which already wide distant look-outs over the distant lower country began to be discerned. As they moved on, to higher ground, away from the hindering veil of trees, these look-outs opened into a great panorama which seemed to take in the whole lower world. And now the great heats were left behind. The air which gently stirred up here was pleasant and fresh ; and the sun



had lost his fierce power. The whole party gladly sat down to rest upon some slabs of lichen-grown rock. All, that is, except Fenton.

"What is the first thing to be done?" asked that young gentleman.

"Get cool, — and then keep so," said his uncle. "How delicious the air is!"

"As soft as satin," said Mrs. Ponsonby. "And yet there is life in it too."

"Uncle Eden," said Esther, "I never saw the sky so large."

"You never saw so much of it at once."

"What's that shining away down there? is it water? It looks like water. Away down yonder among those far-off hills."

"That is Haverstraw bay, or Tappan sea; I don't know which; a good many miles off."

"And what blue mountains are up yonder? Are those the Catskills?"

"Those are the Catskills."

"And this is Buttermilk County at our

feet," said Mrs. Ponsonby. "How lovely those receding shades of green are, Eden. I can count seven."

"The furthest off is *blue*, aunt Patty," said Esther. "Oh, I'm so glad we're here!"

It was impossible to sit still any longer. With that, the whole band of children rose to their feet; Esther indulging in a dancing motion which seemed to say that the long up-hill walk had not tired her much.

"But there is a great deal to do before night, uncle Eden," said Fenton. "When are you going to begin? What o'clock is it now?"

"Near twelve."

"What is to be done first?"

"What do you think of lunch?" said Mrs. Ponsonby. A suggestion which instantly brought the young ones in a compact group around her. The basket in her hand was uncovered now; and there was a delicious pile of sandwiches unfolded from the white

napkin. The children eat standing and dancing.

“Oh I’m so glad we came!” said Essie again. “Have you got any water, aunt Patty?”

No water. So then there was an expedition to the spring; of Mr. Murray and Fenton in the first place, but all the children trooping after. They came back with a pailful of excellent quality.

“It’s a good way off, though,” said Fenton. “Where shall you pitch the tent, uncle Eden? Don’t you think it had better be over that way?”

“The ground falls that way. We should have less view. I am going up yonder — to that group of trees near the highest part of the hill.”

“There? Why, it’ll be an awful job to get the water, for tea and everything. Are you going to keep Will or Benson with us, uncle Eden?”

“No. The bringing of water I am going to entrust to you.”

“Whew!” said Fenton half under his breath. “I hope you’ll be very economical, aunt Patty, in the use of it. Uncle Eden, I shall have to walk a mile a day, to bring all the pailfuls that will be wanted.”

“Well?” — said Uncle Eden.

“What are you going to entrust to me, uncle Eden?” said Esther.

Mr. Murray finished his sandwich, and unfolded in Mrs. Ponsonby’s basket a reserve of white peaches. The children made one exclamation, and then exclamations were stopped.

“If we had known *these* were here,” said Fenton, half way through one juicy sphere, — “Did you know she had got them, uncle Eden?”

“Who?”

“Aunt Patty, I mean. Did you know she had got these in her basket?”

“I did.”

“We needn’t have gone for the water.”

There was a general laugh at Fenton’s

expense, which he, busy with another peach, did not mind ; and then Mr. Murray, remarking that this boy wanted something more to do, rose up and began to move towards the above-mentioned clump of trees, which stood on nearly the highest ground of the hill.

Here the outlook was wide and fair, even more than from the place where they had been sitting. The river came more into view, and the uplands beyond Mosswood ; Mosswood itself lay too low and too near to be seen but in part. By Mr. Murray's direction the sled was dragged to this spot with its load ; one of the men was set to clearing a piece of the ground from its encumbering growth of huckleberry bushes ; the other was sent back with the unloaded sled to collect a supply of firewood ; " to begin with," as Mr. Murray said. Then Mr. Murray and Fenton went off together ; quite out of sight or hearing. The cutting down of the huckleberry bushes was rather a slow business ; they grew so thick and were " so uncommon

woody," as Benson phrased it. It was easy waiting, however, up there under the shadow of the trees. If the sun was bright, the air was deliciously tempered and sweet, to those who had been gasping in the oven-like heats of the valley. Mrs. Ponsonby sat down and enjoyed it. The girls could not be quite so passive.

"There is no place here for us to sleep," remarked Josie, after she had considered the ground.

"Not yet," said Esther; "but there will be."

"We can't sleep on these bushes."

"We aren't going to. Benson is cutting a place. Uncle Eden will put up our tent there. O, isn't it glorious!"

And Esther indulged in a little caper of ecstasy.

"But we can't sleep on *that*," said Josie. "Look,—it is all rough with these points jagging up; the points of the stems he has cut. What will you do with them?"

"I don't know. Uncle Eden knows how to manage it."

"He can't make it smooth," said Josie; "and if our carpet was spread on this rock it would be *very* hard; but I think it would be better than that."

"Uncle Eden will get some beds for us, you know; he said he would."

"I don't see how he can," said Josie; "there are none up here. And where shall we eat?"

"Here, — or anywhere. O I don't care. It will be sure to be good, if uncle Eden arranges it."

"I don't know," said Josie. "We took lunch very well, standing or anyhow; but you can't eat breakfast and dinner so. And I think, we want some chairs to be comfortable."

A little dismayed at her companion, Esther eagerly turned to Fenton who now appeared, flushed and panting, drawing after him a huge hemlock branch.

“Well Fenton, where have you been? What is uncle Eden doing?”

“He’s coming,” said Fenton, throwing down his load. “Has Benson got that place cleared yet? We want to set the tent up. We’ve been getting your beds.”

“What are they? where are they?” cried Esther. Fenton shook his hemlock branch.

“*That?*” cried both girls at once. “Oh Fenton! *that?*”

“We can’t sleep on such a bed as that,” said Josie with infinite disgust. “Nobody could, but a chicken.”

“Wait till you see,” said Fenton; and then he ran off for another branch. The little girls looked amazed, and Josie nearly ready to cry.

“I think we’d better go home,” she said; “it don’t look pleasant, Essie. I can’t sleep *anyhow*; I always want a good bed; a *nice*, *soft* bed. It will be very disagreeable here at night. I think we had better go home, before it gets too late.”

Esther was hard put to it for an answer,

though not sharing Josie's fears or discomfiture ; however, then appeared Mr. Murray and Fenton again, and there was a diversion. Benson had by this time cleared a good space of ground. Mr. Murray had cut some slim poles and trimmed them ; and a quantity of the despised hemlock branches also appeared, heaped on the sled. The children now stood and looked on curiously while this new sort of building went on. Two poles were set firmly in the ground, at some distance from each other, and a third laid across them and made fast to crotches at the top. The canvass bundle was next unroped and the tent unfolded and thrown over this cross pole. Its curtains hung down together flatly ; rope ends lay about in all directions disorderly ; the prospect seemed very bare.

“ Is *that* a tent ? ” said Esther.

“ It looks like things hung out on a line to dry,” said Josie, “ I don't see what use it can be.”

But presently Mr. Murray stretched out one

corner of the hanging canvass and pinned it to the ground with a great wooden pin. Then the opposite corner, in like manner, and then the third and fourth. Finally, he went on to stake down firmly, with a great many more pins, the whole extent of the tent border. It shewed now like a snug little house.

“ But the least wind would blow it over,” said Josie.

“ It is very small — ” said Esther.

Maggie found her way in, with Fanny Elizabeth in her arms, and sat down delighted.

“ We can’t possibly all get into that,” said Josie again. The remarks were made softly to her friend Essie, whom they worried considerably.

“ We aren’t going to,” said Fenton, who caught this whisper. “ Uncle Eden and I are going to sleep under the stars, and keep up the night fires.”

“ Are we? Who told you that? ” inquired the supposed partner of his vigils.

“ You said so, sir.”

“What?”

“That you and I would sleep outside of the tent.”

“Yes, but did I say anything about *not* sleeping?”

“Well, but I have read, uncle Eden, that when travellers camp out they always keep up fires at night?”

“Do they! What for?”

“To keep off wild beasts, sometimes,” Fenton announced with a rather lowered tone.

“Oh! And what wild beasts must we look out for here?”

“I don’t know!” said Fenton, “I don’t know all about the natural history of the State of New York.”

“I have read of a man who travelled in charge of a company of geese somewhere, and found it needful to surround them with a ring of fire at night; but the cases are not parallel.”

“Not what; uncle Eden?” asked Maggie.

“Not like, my dear.”

“I should think not,” said Maggie.
“Where was that, uncle Eden?”

“In India. He was going a long journey from some place on the coast to Bangalore in the interior, where the geese were to be sold and eaten.”

“What did he make the fire at night for?”

“To keep off tigers, I suppose; and snakes; and elephants perhaps; and anything else that would spoil the Bangalore dinners.”

“How did he keep them off by day?”

“I have almost forgotten. I think he carried a bell, or bells, on the end of a pole, jingling all along the road; yes, I recollect; little bells at the end of long slim pieces of bamboo, which would never be still. The old man and his boy each carried one.”

“O, he had a boy!”

“Yes, and two fierce dogs.”

“What did *they* do, uncle Eden?”

“Took the geese by the scruff of the neck and shook them well, if they straggled from the line of march.”

“Were they walking?”

“Certainly ; two hundred geese, and a man, and a boy.”

“Two hundred ! But they must have gone very slowly,” said Fenton.

“As a goose walks.”

“And that’s just a slow, fat waddle.”

“Had they far to go ? ”

“I think, near three hundred miles.”

“And to walk it with two hundred geese ! ” cried Fenton. “Ho ! that’s a story. Why it must have taken them half a year.”

“Not quite so long, I fancy.”

“Maybe it was a good road, and not many wild beasts near.”

“On the contrary. It was from the western coast at Cochin to Bangalore in the middle of the country ; and the way was through the passes of a line of great mountains ; where nobody lives and where no cultivation goes on ; but the leopards and tigers and elephants and buffaloes and monkeys have it all their own way, along with very large and very

deadly serpents. Still, there are travellers' stations to be found, where there are not villages; the old man and the geese could always reach one or the other."

"How funny," said Esther. "Didn't they often get killed, uncle Eden?"

"Who? the old man or the geese?"

"I mean the geese, of course."

"Very seldom indeed, till they got to Bangalore."

"But at night, uncle Eden; the man and boy would have to sleep at night; who would keep the geese from straying then? the dogs?"

"At night the geese were covered under two or three great wicker baskets. And the line of fire kept off the wild creatures. The first thing to do, when they came to the place where they were going to stay for the night, was to send into the village or station and borrow a wooden spade. This was used to dig a trench all round the camping place; a trench eight inches broad and deep; and while the old man dug this, the boy gathered

dry sticks and brush enough to fill it. Then the poor geese had their supper of bran and were covered up; and the man and boy took *their* supper of rice and curry. Then they set up the two bamboo sticks in the ground, where the little bells would keep up a tinkling all night long, as the light wind bent the supple bamboo; and *then* they could lie down and go to sleep fearlessly; having first lit fire in the trench all round them."

"And didn't the geese have any more to eat?" Maggie inquired.

"Breakfast of bran in the morning."

"How can they like it?" said Josie.

"*You'd* say, it's because they are geese," said Fenton.

"I should think they would have been tired if they *were* geese," said Josie. "Tired of travelling, I mean."

"I suppose a goose never is," said Fenton.

"I suppose a goose can stand—and so walk—a good deal," said Mr. Murray.

"However, if one of the flock shewed signs of

giving out or not bearing the journey, he went into the old man's curry pot, that was all."

"But we've no leopards and tigers here, uncle Eden," remarked Maggie.

"None, my pet ; so you need not want me to dig a trench all round the tent. It was only in the wild jungle that the goose driver found it necessary. In the open country a good large fire near was thought sufficient."

"Will you make a fire, uncle Eden ?"

"Just to boil our kettle and cook our fish ; the smallest fire that will do, Maggie."

While this talk was going on, Mr. Murray had been busy. He was trimming off with his hatchet the green sprays and sprigs of hemlock from the branches they had brought home ; till he had a great pile of them ; sprays and sprigs not more than two or three feet long. Now he went on to place these with great care over the floor of the tent, close together, and in such a way that the soft feathery end of each one was uppermost and the woody hard end down below out of the way. When the

whole tent was thus filled with a fragrant heap of leafage, Mr. Murray took the carpet from their stores and spread it evenly over the whole.

“What’s that for?” the children asked.

“That is your bed; and the best you ever slept on.”

“That?” — but in less than a quarter of a minute they were all four testing it.

“O jolly!” Fenton cried. “Will you make one like this for us, uncle Eden?”

“Come out, and do not help beat down what is not for you, Fenton. You can make what you like for yourself.”

“Will you lend me your hatchet?”

“When I have done with it. How does it feel, Maggie?”

Maggie declared, lying with her curly head down on a blanket, that it was as nice as anything could possibly be. Esther was in a state of delight. Josie sat upright on the soft, springy cushion of verdure, and looked around her with a doubtful, puzzled air. It

was comfortable ; she felt that ; but what a very odd bed, and what a very straitened bedroom ! Mr. Murray, meanwhile, was persistently busy ; going round the tent and seeing that all the fastenings were secure ; rolling large sticks or timbers against the edges of the tent curtain, to stop any gap there ; driving up nails to hang clothes on ; arranging a lantern to hang from the ridge pole ; and bestowing the portmanteau and a box or two where they might serve for seats.

“ It’s splendid, uncle Eden ! ” was Esther’s verdict, when at last the pillows were in place. “ It’s the nicest house I ever saw in my life.”

“ Are we going to have no pillowcases ? ” asked Josie, dismayed.

“ Not up here ! ” said Esther, as if pillowcases and mountain tops had a natural tendency to disagree ; “ but we can put a towel under our faces, you know. We’ve got plenty of towels. Now is all done, uncle Eden ? ”

“Not quite. We must have a kitchen.”

“A kitchen! O how are you going to fix a kitchen?”

“No need to *fix* it. It will stay fast when it is once made, no fear. The thing is to find a good place.”

CHAPTER IV.

THE place was found a little way off, at the brink of the descent of the hillside ; where stones, large and small, lay thickly about, and broken ledges of rock gave seats and platforms. Mr. Murray and the two men built here a nice fireplace, where the kettle could sit conveniently above the blaze and the fire burn unhindered. The dry wood for fuel was heaped near by. The boxes and baskets containing the stores, gathered together, were protected from possible weather by a piece of canvass stretched over them. And then Mr. Murray laid down his hatchet, which Fenton seized, and sat down himself to rest. Fenton and the two men went off. Mrs. Ponsonby and the little girls came to places near Mr. Murray ; and they all began to feel at home. By this time

the sun was going down the western sky, and pretty far on his way. The air was growing quite fresh, up on the mountain where they were ; and the light was becoming cooler. It came in slant rays now, and left shadows on the eastern side of the hills ; while the western slopes on which it lay glowed and shone in contrast. But here and there a shadow was on the river ; and where the ground fell away at their right, for they were sitting with their faces to the north, already it was completely out of the sun. The whole blue heaven was clear, some little flecks of cloud lingering about the horizon in the north and northwest, which would shew all colours by and by. Mrs. Ponsonby drew a shawl round her.

“ How lovely it is ! ” she said. “ How refreshing.”

“ Yes. We have got into another climate.”

“ I suppose they’ve been ever so hot down in Mosswood, all day,” Esther remarked.

“I suppose they are ‘ever so hot’ there now,” her uncle replied. “This sweet little breath of a breeze which we feel, does not get to them.”

“Uncle Eden,” said Esther confidentially, moving closer up to him, — “I never seemed to know how big the world is, before.”

“Didn’t you! Do you think you know now, Essie?”

“No — I don’t suppose I do; but the mountains look so different up here; so great and long; and we can see so far.”

“It’s but a little speck of the earth’s surface, after all, Essie; and these hills are not much more than a plough furrow, compared with others there are.”

“A plough furrow!” exclaimed Esther.

“What would you think of mountains twenty five or twenty six thousand feet high?”

“I don’t know, uncle Eden; I don’t know how high *these* are.”

“We are about fifteen hundred feet above the river.”

“I’ve seen higher hills than these,” said Josie competently. “We were at the White mountains last summer.”

After a while Fenton appeared again, with the two men and the sled and another load of hemlock boughs. And then Mr. Murray said the men must go home immediately; what more might be wanted could be done without their help; they would need all their time to get home.

“What more is to be done, uncle Eden?” Fenton inquired with rather a tired voice.

“Get our supper and make our bed; that’s about all. We want water first for the tea-kettle, Fenton.”

“O, can’t Will fetch it before he goes, sir? I’m tired, and no mistake.”

“Will is off. Take the pail, and never mind being tired. I’ll light the fire while you go.”

“O let me light the fire, uncle Eden, sir! I’ll get the water while it is burning up. May I?”

Mr. Murray gave way and handed Fenton the box of matches. This was a matter of general interest. Esther and Josie and Maggie all crowded down to see the fire kindled in the stone fireplace. Fenton did it fairly well, after a trial or two ; piled on a quantity of small dry stuff, and took up his pail.

“ Now Esther, don’t you let it go down while I am away,” he said.

It was most delightful work to watch the blaze and hear the snapping and crackling of the sticks, and to feed the fire as it burned down. The best play that could be, they voted it. Till Fenton came back, and the little kettle was filled and set over the flame ; and they all took their places again on the rocks to rest. Fenton declared he was dead beat, and could not prepare his bed till after tea ; and Maggie crept into her uncle’s arms. Where indeed she loved to be.

“ Will it be quite safe in our tent, uncle Eden ? ”

“Quite safe, my pet. I shall be close by, to take care of you.”

“Who’ll take care of *you*?” said the child.

Mr. Murray’s face was what a child trusts and likes to look upon, very sweet and grave and manly; and his voice was tender and quiet as he answered,

“My Father.”

Maggie drew herself a little back to look at him.

“He isn’t here,” — she said doubtfully.

“Yes. He is here.”

“Whom do you mean, uncle Eden?” said Fenton.

“Whom do you speak to, every night when you say your prayers?”

The boy looked astounded for a moment, and then answered, “To nobody.”

“You always begin with the words, ‘Our Father’” —

“Well, that’s nothing,” said Fenton. “I am not speaking to anybody.”

Uncle Eden's eye went round the circle.

"I think that is very shocking," said Josie.

"He speaks to God, of course."

"No, I don't," said Fenton hardily.

"And you, Josie," said Mr. Murray
"how is it with you? do *you* speak to him,
every night and morning?"

"Why Mr. Murray," said Josie, "you
know I am so tired often; and sometimes
I forget."

"Essie?"

"I never think about it at all, uncle Eden.
— Is that wrong?"

"What do you think?"

"Why, I never knew anything about it,"
— said Essie doubtfully.

"What do you think? Should I like it,
if you were in the habit of speaking to me
in that fashion? Perhaps also you say what
you do not mean, in saying your prayers."

"I never think about it," repeated Essie, a
little confused. "I don't know what we do
say; only it's the Lord's prayer."

“I don’t know what it means, or what is the use of it,” said Fenton in his former tone. “I say it because I was obliged to say it.”

“Have you any idea why it is called the Lord’s prayer?”

The children all looked blank and avowed their ignorance. Mr. Murray took out of his bag a small Testament and put it in Maggie’s hands, open at the sixth chapter of Matthew, and bade her read at the ninth verse and on. Which she did, very nicely. And then in the eleventh chapter of Luke, the first four verses.

“Who said that, Maggie?”

“Both?” inquired Maggie looking up.

“It is the same story, told in two different places, by two different people. Who was it, that gave that lesson in praying?”

“I don’t know.”

“It was the Lord Jesus Christ,” said Josie when all the others were silent. “I should think they would know that.”

“So it is called *the Lord's prayer*. Now, had we not better try to find out what it means?”

A moment's silence again; and then Josie exclaimed, “Why, I know what it means.”

“I don't,” said Fenton. “I never did. I have said it because it was taught me and they made me say it. I don't see the use of the whole thing.”

“Perhaps we shall find it out. If I were a king, would you see no use in speaking to me?”

“I guess I would!” said Fenton. “Wouldn't I get a grey pony pretty quick!”

“You would not speak to me without meaning what you said, and knowing whom you were speaking to.”

“I guess I wouldn't!” said Fenton. “I should mean such a lot of things, I should have a great deal to say.”

“But God is a great King, Lord of heaven and earth; able to do a vast deal more for

you than I could, if I wore the crown of an earthly kingdom."

"But we can see you, uncle Eden," said Esther.

"Suppose I were at the upper end of a long room with a veil drawn across, and you near the other side of the veil. You would speak to me, all the same, I think."

"But we know you would hear us, uncle Eden."

"Yes."

"And we know you would give us what we wanted, if you didn't think it was bad for us."

"Very well. Who was it that said, 'Ask, and it shall be given you?'"

"But," — said Esther, and stopped.

"This isn't like," said Fenton.

"Not exactly; for I am only your uncle, and cannot do all it would please me to do. But God is 'our Father;' and can do what he will."

"That's only a name," said Fenton.

“What do you mean by its being only a name?”

“Why! — it don’t mean much.”

“What do you mean by it when you call a certain Mr. Candlish, of Mosswood, your father?”

“O but he *is* father,” said Fenton.

“Being your father, how is he different to you from other men?”

“He loves us better.”

“Very well; go on.”

“He is the master of the house and owns the place and says how everything shall be.”

“Go on.”

“He gives us everything; our clothes and our food and all.”

“And he cares about what we do,” said Esther.

“And he takes me up on his lap and kisses me,” said Maggie. “So do you, uncle Eden, but not like papa.”

Mr. Murray smiled. “Excellent!” he said. “Go on.”

"I can't think of anything else," said Fenton. "Papa settles where we are to live; when we go to town, and when we go to the sea shore, and when we come to Mosswood."

"And what you shall learn."

"O yes! and what we must learn."

"And if you do not obey him — ?"

"We always *do*," said Maggie.

"When you *did* not obey him, then ?"

"He punished us," Fenton answered.

"And when my head aches, papa is sorry," Maggie added.

"All true; all right," said Mr. Murray.

"Do you see that our tea-kettle is boiling over ?"

"What shall we do with it, uncle Eden ?" asked Esther.

"Do ? why, make our tea. You and Josie get out the cups and saucers and plates and set the table. That's your business, you know."

It was quite delightful business. No table could be even pretended ; each one's cup and

plate had to go on the rock by itself where it could best find a standing place. Mrs. Ponsonby made the tea, and set the little tea-pot down on the hot ashes to keep hot and draw the tea. And then she produced things out of another basket ; sugar and cream and bread and butter and the cold chicken. The salt-cellar went round from hand to hand ; the children, as they could not have their bowls of milk, were indulged with cups of weak tea ; the tea-pot had to travel a great many times from the fire to refill first one cup and then another. And I never can tell you how nice it all was ; how voracious the children were over the bread and cold chicken ; how the sun went down behind a low western horizon and left golden glories in the sky, and how the little clouds which had been grey and black upon that glory, by and by, when it paled, came out in purples and rose tints ; and how the soft dusky shadow of the night crept over the low ground and up the slopes of the hills. But even Josie was in a state of full content.

It was not soon dark, for a bright moon was high in the sky. So it was easy to wash tea-cups and put away the remains of supper; and then they all gathered again around uncle Eden on the rocks and watched the wonderful beautiful world beneath them. Maggie was in his arms again; Esther close by, where she could touch him; Fenton at his feet.

“Do you see how our Father is drawing the curtain of darkness over the world?” Mr. Murray said.

“Uncle Eden,” said Esther, “that is just night coming on, because the sun is set.”

“Very well; that is exactly the sort of curtain we want, to go to sleep under; a thicker one would not answer. See how the Lord has drawn it over the east already, and how it is softly covering all up.”

“What for, uncle Eden?” said Maggie, “Why don’t it be day all the time?”

“Could you do without sleep, Maggie? How long?”

“I could sleep if the sun was shining.”

“Not so well. And the plants could not sleep. And if God did not draw his soft curtain over us, the world would never stop work, and I think it would go mad.”

“But God don’t really do that,” said Fenton; “you are only talking so, uncle Eden.”

“I am talking the very sweet truth, children. It is our Father’s tender hand that draws that curtain over sorrowing eyes, and they sleep and forget everything; and over tired workers, hand-weary and foot-sore, and they drop their labour and rest; and over busy, anxious brains that are half crazed with thinking, and their eyelids close and their thoughts go from them, for a time. Then in the morning every one is refreshed and made ready to go on again.”

“I never knew that before,” said Maggie, so gravely that they all laughed.

“But God does not do it for *that*, does he?” Esther asked.

“For what?”

“Why, that working people may be obliged to stop, and that tired people may rest.”

“Certainly he does. It is for other reasons too ; but God’s work is perfect and fits everything.”

“I didn’t think he cares.”

“That was a grand mistake. He knows where there is a tired hand and an aching heart ; and he knows that when he brings night over the land the one will rest and the other forget.”

“But does he *care*, uncle Eden ?”

“Does mamma care, when she carries away the light that little eyelids may keep safe closed and nobody’s sleep be broken ? God loves his own dear children much better even than she loves hers. ‘In all their affliction,’ he says, ‘*he* was afflicted ; and the Angel of his presence saved them.’”

“Why, sir,” broke in Fenton, “the sun *has* to go on setting and getting up.”

“Why ?”

“Why, it always does.”

“Why?”

“Ain’t that a curious question, uncle Eden?”

“No. Perfectly right and reasonable. Give an answer accordingly.”

“I dont know why,” said Fenton, rather doggedly, after a pause.

“I can tell,” said Maggie. “It was *made* so. Wasn’t it?”

“Made so and *kept* so; for the Lord Jesus ‘upholds all things by the word of his power.’ Lo, he ‘maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good;’ he ‘maketh darkness, and it is night;’ ‘the sun knoweth his going down,’ and does just what it is appointed to do.”

“Because he tells it to get up and go down?” said Fenton with an incredulous look.

“By the word of his power.”

“Then some day perhaps he will *not* tell it to get up,” said Josie. “What then?”

“Then there will come a change. For ‘while the earth remaineth, seed time and

harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease.' The Lord promised Noah, and he will keep his promise."

"*Will* he take away the sun by and by?" asked Maggie earnestly.

"Perhaps. I don't know, Daisy."

"What would people do then, without the sun? It would be *all* night."

"No. I can tell you, for the Lord has told us, what some people will do. 'The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory. Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.'"

"When, uncle Eden?" said Maggie.

"When the Lord makes all things new."

"We sha'n't be there, shall we?"

"Every one of us."

•

“Are you glad, uncle Eden?”

“Very glad.”

“I am not,” said Maggie gravely. “I don’t like it.”

“What made somebody so glad to get back from Saratoga Springs, a little while ago?”

“O, I was glad to get home, uncle Eden?”

“Why, particularly?”

“Home? I think home is just the nicest place in the whole world,” said Maggie, softly clapping her hands.

“So I think,” said Esther, chiming in.

“Granted. But what makes home so much better than other places?”

“I don’t know,” said Maggie doubtfully.

“Everything.”

“What in especial?” said Mr. Murray smiling. “What most of all?”

“Oh! — Because papa is there.”

“You’ve hit it. So I like home best of all places; because my Father is there, — and my Lord. My Father’s house is the best place.”

“ Oh, but you don’t just *mean* that, uncle Eden ? ”

“ Why shouldn’t I mean it ? ” And there was a certain quiet sweetness of look in Mr. Murray’s face, before which the children stood convinced. They were silent ; and then Maggie said wistfully,

“ Uncle Eden — do you think God *feels* as if we were his children ? ”

“ I know he does.”

“ How do you know, sir ? ” Fenton inquired boldly, yet respectfully.

“ He has told us so.”

“ Where, sir ? ”

“ Where he has told us other things. In the Bible. He has told us that he is grieved at our ill-doing ; that if we ask him privately for what we want, he will hear and give ; that he is more ready to give us good things than our own fathers and mothers are. He says he has a tender pity for us in our weakness, — as papa has for you, Maggie ; he says that he sends his angels to watch over us and

take care of us. He says the very hairs of our heads are numbered ; and he knows our wants, and will supply what we need ; and he loves us. I am speaking now of his own children, those who love him ; to others he is as an offended Father ; you know how that is."

"Do his angels take care of us ?" Maggie asked.

"He gives them charge over his own children, to keep them in all their ways."

"Are we his own children ?"

"What do you think, Maggie ?"

"I didn't know he was my Father."

"Then you have been living pretty far off, haven't you ? But he has taken care of you, all the same, and sent you loads of good things. I don't know a little girl who has more."

"Did God give them ?" said Maggie, very much astounded.

"Every one. Every good gift."

"Why uncle Eden," broke in Fenton,

"mamma and papa have given us almost all we have got."

"God prepared the things, and gave them to your father and mother first, to give to you. "*Every* good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above."

"I didn't know that," Esther said.

"How did he prepare them?" Fenton asked.

"We'll talk about that to-morrow."

"Uncle Eden," said Esther, "I don't *feel* as if he was my Father."

"That is true, no doubt; and that is because you are not one of his obedient children, Essie. When a child does not obey its father, it is not apt to feel a child's love towards him; is it?"

"Does anybody really *feel* so?"

"I do."

"Do you feel about him as we do about papa?"

"Much more, Essie."

"I don't see how you can!"

“What is more, I am with him all the day long. I ask him for what I want, and he gives it to me. And all he gives me that I do not ask for, I know comes out of his love.”

“Does he always give you everything you ask for, uncle Eden?” Maggie said wistfully.

“How is it with Maggie and her papa?”

“Sometimes he says no, when it isn’t good for me.”

“My Father in heaven will not give me anything that would do me harm. And your papa, you know, might now and then be mistaken : but God always knows.”

“What are your arrangements going to be for the night?” asked Mrs. Ponsonby. She had been as quiet as a mouse until then.

“Time to shew,” said Mr. Murray.

He got up from the rock, and went off a few steps to where a pile of brush and sticks lay, in front of the tent. Presently, in the dusky shadow of the place, a little kindling light was visible ; a tiny flame began to flicker among the brushwood ; and then, in a

moment, sprang up clear and strong to the top of the pile. Snapping and crackling, the little heap of wood would soon have been gone; but now Mr. Murray began to pile on billets of larger size; and a bright steady blaze lighted up the rocks, the trees, and the inside of the tent, and dashed into the face of the moonlight.

"There!" said Mr. Murray; "I have made an illumination for you; now you can go to bed as soon as you please."

The little girls at first were in some doubt how this was to be done. They and Mrs. Ponsonby went into the tent, which seemed full of them standing. And their bed was under their feet!

"O aunt Patty! can we ever sleep here?" Esther cried.

"There is no place at all!" said Josie.

"Take off your things and put on your wrappers, and then we will see about it," said Mrs. Ponsonby. "One thing at a time."

“But where is Mr. Murray? and Fenton?” Josie asked.

“Gone off to their own sleeping place, not far off; you need not be concerned.”

Josie however doubted exceedingly of the possibility of sleeping where she was: until, having got herself snugly enveloped in her wrapper, she and Esther lay down between the blankets. And then, “Oh, aint it nice!” — burst from both children.

“Why it’s so soft!” cried Josie.

“And it smells so sweet!” echoed Esther.

“It’s better than a spring bed.”

“It’s nicer than lavender. And the fire. O Josie, see the fire! what a nice light we’ve got in our room. It’s twice as good as candles. I could see to read.”

“I should like to sleep here always,” said Josie. “How many nights are we going to stay?”

“I don’t know. I hope we’ll stay a week.”

“I guess we will,” said Maggie as she

cuddled down ; “because, you know, it’s so hot down at Mosswood.”

It was but three minutes, and every little head was lying on its pillow with fast shut eyes ; and the light of the fire rose and fell, not more gently than each little bosom.

CHAPTER V.

WHEN Esther woke up, next morning, she was puzzled at first to know where she was. The little tent was light enough now with growing daylight; and odd it looked, with heaps of clothes hanging to the pins Mr. Murray had put up, and the floor filled with its bed, and the three sleepers yet lying there. Esther was in a blue flannel bathing dress and trowsers; the air felt pleasantly fresh but not cold; she pulled a bit open the curtains which closed the door of the tent and peeped out. Fenton was standing just before her.

“O Fen,” she said softly, “where are we going to wash ourselves?”

“Hollo, Essie! is that you?”

“Hush! nobody’s awake yet. Where’s uncle Eden? where can I wash my face, Fenton?”

“Uncle Eden’s gone off to get breakfast: he’s left me here to attend to the fire and the tea-kettle. It’s jolly, I tell you! The sun is just putting my eyes out, getting up over yonder. I say, Essie! *he* has a big bed to step out of!”

“Nonsense, Fenton! you know he don’t really rise up and go down. He don’t stir.”

“Yes, he does *stir*,” said Fenton. “Esther, it’s funny things should seem to be as they aint.”

“Well, where can I wash my face? O Fenton, then I’ll come and help you. Where can I wash?”

“Most anywhere; you can take your choice. You’ve got a jolly big place to dress in. Come along; I’ll shew you. Uncle Eden has fixed everything.”

“But mamma doesn’t like you to say ‘aint,’ and ‘fix,’” said Esther as she cautiously stepped out.

“Do you think people mind how they talk when they’re on the tops of mountains? They

don't, I tell you. They've got something else to think of. *I* have, anyhow. Here, — there you are."

Esther uttered an exclamation ; for on the rocks, behind the fireplace, she spied a tin basin, with a pail and dipper near ; while on the branches of a tree hard by hung the towels. The air was almost still ; the sun's rays were coming across almost level from the opposite mountain top, casting shapeless shadows along the rocks ; and the air was spicy with the summer breath from pine trees and hemlock and moss and herbs and sweet-férn. And the water felt so fresh. Everything down at Mosswood had been hot and unpleasant lately. Esther enjoyed her washing, and her napkin which was aided by the gentle fresh air ; and then she came to see what Fenton was doing.

He was keeping the fire up and watching the kettle, which already had begun to sing ; whistling and very important.

"Where is uncle Eden gone ?"

“Over to the lake.”

“Fishing?”

“I guess so.”

“He’ll bring us some for breakfast! How shall it be cooked, though? Who’ll do that? Uncle Eden said *we* were to do the cooking.”

“It’ll be a pretty fish if *you* cook it,” said Fenton frankly.

“I don’t believe aunt Patty knows how. O Fenton, I’ll run and get dressed, so as to be ready.”

All the tent was asleep yet; and Esther dressed herself without making any disturbance. As she ran out again she saw Mr. Murray just coming; and lo, two fine suckers in his hand. The kettle was boiling; the coals were hot; the three met at the fire.

“O uncle Eden, have you got fish for breakfast?”

“What do you think?” said Mr. Murray displaying his gains.

“But who’s to cook them, uncle Eden?”

“You, — if you are the first ready.”

"O I'm *all* ready. But only, I don't know how."

"Ignorance can always be mended. Get on an apron, Essie. I don't like cooks without aprons."

"Haven't the fish got to be cleaned first, sir?" Fenton asked as Esther ran away.

"That you may do."

"I don't know anything about it."

"You will do well to learn."

"Isn't it a very disagreeable job, sir?" Fenton asked, eyeing the fish askance.

"Well, it is not an amusement to be chosen for its delectable conditions," said Mr. Murray. "I am not fond of the smell of raw fish, myself; and the touch has nothing to recommend it."

"The insides must be taken out, mustn't they?"

"Usually."

"Do you think it is business for a gentleman?" was Fenton's next inquiry.

"Do you think eating is?"

“Why yes, sir. People have to eat.”

“And food has to be prepared.”

“But not by gentlemen, uncle Eden?”

“Why not?”

“Why they have somebody else to do it for them.”

“Do they. Whom would you have perform that pleasant office for you in the present instance?”

“I should think some of the girls might do it,” said Fenton looking excessively disgusted.

“That is the way savages do.”

“What, sir?”

“Give the women the hardest. But the rule on Eagle hill, and in the present company is, ‘If any man will not work, neither shall he eat.’”

Fenton looked rather glum, and quite undecided. “Are suckers good fish?” was his next question. Mr. Murray laughed.

“I hope you’ll think so,” he said. “Come, my boy; it’s not beneath a gentleman to do

anything that has to be done ; especially when the alternative falls upon weaker or more delicate hands. Gird a towel before you somehow, as I see Essie has done, and take hold bravely."

Fenton was persuaded. He took the knife and followed directions ; and soon was cleverly at work, while Esther stood by admiring, and Mr. Murray sat on the rock and told him what to do.

" Now, Essie, comes your part. Get a pan of water and wash the fish nicely. — Now draw out a little bed of coals from the fire, while I rub a bit of pork over the bars of the gridiron."

" What for, uncle Eden ? "

" To prevent your fish from sticking fast. There, Essie ; now set them over the coals. Fenton, go see if your aunt is ready ; and call Josie and Maggie to lay the cloth."

There never was anything so utterly delightful as that morning on the top of the hill. The air was cool and crisp ; the light

making gold emblazonry on rocks and trees ; and Maggie and Josie ran about, very hungry and very happy, to get plates and napkins and cups in order. Mr. Murray made the tea. And Esther meanwhile came to the conclusion that the kitchen part of breakfast was the very best. To watch the cooking and sputtering fish ; to watch the change from raw to edible condition ; to turn them with great pains and some breakage, and see the rich brown colour underneath ; and then to dish them and put pepper and salt and butter, and see her work finished and creditable ; was altogether a very great entertainment. She came to take her part in the feast with a very flushed face and extremely bright eyes. The fish were excellent.

“ This is really delightful ! ” said Mrs. Ponsonby. “ How different from the broiling condition of everything at Mosswood. ”

“ Here, it is only the fish that are broiled. ”

“ It’s royal, ” said Fenton. “ And the fish too. I never knew suckers were good for anything before. ”

“All the better because you cleaned them yourself, eh?” said his uncle. “Well, Maggie; how did the hemlock bed do?”

“I don’t know, uncle Eden; we all slept like tops.”

“No alarms of wild animals?”

“O no! I wasn’t a bit afraid.”

“But how was it, Maggie, that nothing troubled us, and that we all got up well this morning?”

Maggie’s eyes opened.

“Why, uncle Eden, there *was* nothing to trouble us.”

“There might have been?”

“A panther?” said Maggie, turning a little pale.

“Not a panther. There are none hereabouts. But many little heads ached last night; many had nothing half so good as a hemlock bed to lie upon; many little eyes closed forever on this world. Who has kept us all?”

“Do you mean—” said Maggie, and stopped.

“Yes. Our Father. He drew the curtains of the night round us ; he bade his angels take care of us ; and so, here we are, every one. And now he has made his sun to rise upon us.”

“It rises upon everybody, uncle Eden,” said Fenton.

“Yes ; and God takes care of everybody ; he thinks of everybody.”

“Does he !” said Esther.

“I don’t see how he *can*,” said Josie.

“No ; it is quite beyond you and me to see how he can. But it is quite true. ‘I laid me down and slept ; I awaked, for the Lord sustained me.’ ‘His tender mercies are over all his works.’ ‘O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard : which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.’”

“But *you* took care of us last night, uncle Eden,” said Fenton.

“No, I didn’t.”

“You said you would, sir.”

"I meant only that I would do what I could."

"Doesn't papa take care of us when we are at Mosswood?" Esther asked.

"No."

"I thought he did."

"It is *always* God that takes care of you. Sometimes he uses your father to do it; sometimes me, or somebody else; the *care* is always God's care."

"But uncle Eden," said Esther looking puzzled, "if he is our Father, why don't we *feel* as if he was?"

"I do."

"But I don't, one bit," said Esther.

"Nor I," Josie added.

"And I don't," said Maggie.

"Well, there are reasons. In the first place, though the Lord knows all about you, you do not know him. In the second place, you don't do what he tells you. I never heard that disobedient children had very tender hearts toward their father."

The children paused at that ; until Esther said, " Uncle Eden, I never knew he had told me to do anything ; or not much."

" What did you think he had told you to do ? "

There was silence again. Mr. Murray smiled.

" There is still, perhaps, a third reason," he said. " The Lord says he loves those that love him. When you begin to love him a little bit, you will begin to know the wonderful love that he will then have for you."

" More than he has now ? "

" Certainly. He is kind to the unthankful and the evil ; and Jesus died for them ; but their sins and ugliness are very displeasing to his eyes. Our Father loves best those who are most like Jesus."

" Uncle Eden," said Maggie gravely, " I think you tell us very strange things."

" So I do, my pet."

" Uncle Eden," said Esther with a still greater access of gravity, — " do you think

we ought to say 'Our Father,' when we are saying our prayers, if we don't *feel* so?"

"I think it is never best to say what you don't mean, Essie, in any case."

"Then, for one, *I* should never say prayers at all," burst forth Fenton. "I never do mean anything by them; and I don't see the use of it."

"Isn't that very wicked, Mr. Murray!" said Josie McAllister.

"Then how *should* we do, uncle Eden?" said Esther anxiously.

"Be true, dear, whatever happens. Find out what you do mean, and say that. And no more."

"Uncle Eden, when *you* pray, do you feel as if you were speaking to your Father?"

"I feel as you do when you get up on your father's lap and put your lips close to his ear and tell him very secretly what you want, and how you love him. Do you enjoy that?"

Esther smiled, and Maggie cried out, "O yes, uncle Eden! for he always gives me a kiss; and sometimes he says he'll see about it; and I know what that means."

"I have what is very like that, children," Mr. Murray said gravely. "For God has a way of sending his love down into my heart, which means as much as your father's smile and kiss. And I know when I ask him anything that *he* will 'see about it,' and if it is good he will let me have it."

Fenton listened to this with an odd expression of face, half incredulous, half defiant. But Esther's big brown eyes were wistful. Josie simply stared.

"Who's going to clear away all this breakfast?" said Fenton then. "And what are we going to do to-day, uncle Eden? We must get something for dinner, mustn't we?"

With that, the two little girls jumped up and bustled about, to get the breakfast dishes ready for washing.

“We must get something for dinner certainly,” said Mr. Murray. “For that we will go to Birch lake, all hands. The way is shady after we get off the brow of the hill. I’ll be ready as soon as you are, children.”

I suppose there never were any happier children. The putting to rights was done neatly and with fair despatch, considering how unaccustomed the hands were; and even Josie enjoyed it; while Maggie ran to and fro carrying things, and jumped on the rock between whiles, for exercise. Mrs. Ponsonby was busy in the tent, and Mr. Murray and Fenton preparing bait and lines. At last they were all ready to start, and set forth, a very gay little company indeed. Some carried baskets, and some took rods and lines.

The walk was perhaps two miles long, over the mountains; up and down a little, and rather rough, but shady, and never going down to the lower ground, but keeping the

ridge of the mountain tops. It was very wild. They saw one snake on the way and four squirrels; that was all, except a white-headed eagle which soared about majestically in the blue above them. Maggie strained her neck to look at him.

"What is all that blue, uncle Eden?" asked Fenton, who was likewise craning his neck after the distant black speck.

"Why it's the *sky*, boy!" Maggie answered demurely.

"I know that!" said her brother. "But what is it that is *blue*?"

"The air."

"Air hasn't any colour," rejoined Fenton hastily.

"There spoke ignorance, deciding on what it does not know," said Mr. Murray.

"But I can *see*," urged the boy. "I can *see* that it hasn't any colour."

"I can see that it is blue," replied Mr. Murray. "You have but to lift your eyes, Fenton, to convince yourself of the fact."

“ Then why don't it look blue here, around us ? ”

“ It is so thin — so rare. Looking up into forty miles of it, you get the colour. That is the firmament, or ‘ expanse,’ which God made to divide the waters from the waters.”

“ Why not the *land* from the waters ? ” said Fenton. “ We call this the *earth*, don't we ? ”

“ We do. But wise men tell us that this land of ours was all under water at one time ; and anyhow, when the firmament was created, there was no dry ground visible. It was only the second day of creation.”

“ I wonder what the earth was ever made for ! ” said Fenton.

“ Why Fenton ! ” said his sister ; “ you do say very queer things.”

“ What do you suppose it was made for ? ” Mr. Murray asked calmly.

“ I am sure, I don't know, sir.”

“ For a home for the Lord's children. And the Lord made it very good, and very lovely, for them.”

“ It isn’t very good now,” said Fenton.

“ In what respects ? ”

“ Why it is full of ugly things,” said Fenton, “ and hard things. You can’t have even a garden without lots of trouble, the weeds grow so fast ; and men get drowned fishing, and they get killed blasting rocks, and they fall and break their legs when they are up building walls or raising houses, and they get sick with the poison of paint ; and snakes bite them, and lions and tigers kill them, and horses throw them, and lightning strikes them, and the sun gives them fevers, and the cold gives them consumption, and the wet gives them rheumatism, and fire burns them, and the frost bites off their fingers. And I heard Michael the other day telling Andrew how difficult it was for poor people to make a living ; and Andrew said it was worse in the old country.”

Fenton poured all this out in a steady flow of words. Mr. Murray began to bite his lips, and at last gave way and laughed.

They all laughed, except the speaker, and he was bent on maintaining his ground.

“All true, Fenton,” Mr. Murray said when he could speak; “all quite true; but you forget one thing. There was none of all this in the garden of Eden.”

“No sir; but it’s in the world.”

“Did anything happen in the garden of Eden, that you know of, to change the Lord’s arrangements?”

Fenton was silent; and Esther answered.

“They broke the command about the tree, uncle Eden. But did that make all the difference?”

“Every bit of it. Your mother and father never packed your Christmas stockings with playthings and sweet things, as our Father filled that place with delights for his two children. All sorts of delights. The trouble was, they refused to be his children, and set up for themselves.”

“Then why did God take the good things away?” said Fenton.

“He did not, a great many of them. But he had to keep his word; and so, those horses that John saw in the vision of the Revelation, went forth into the earth.”

“What horses, uncle Eden?” Esther asked.

“Well, we will go into it by and by, Essie, if you like; but I don’t think I can talk about it while I am helping you all over these stones.”

So talk was dropped for a time. Indeed the way was rough. Big rocks sometimes, and masses of stones large and small at other times, hindered their getting along very easily. However, uncle Eden’s hand was ready to help, and little feet were agile and untiring; and the rocks were adorned often with most lovely tufts of ferns, and draperies of moss and lichen covered and beautified them. Very gray and brown, it is true, in this summer weather; not the less the soft tints were harmonious and beautiful and made the woodland a very different place

from what it would have been with the rocks in barren nakedness. The sun rose high as the hours went on ; yet up there, lifted into the air on the mountain top, the heat was not felt to be oppressive. The breeze played gently ; pines and hemlocks made the air fragrant ; the views off into the lower country were enchanting.

These views were lost when the party descended into the hollow where Birch lake lay. A girdle of woods and higher ground encircled the place ; and sky and lake had it pretty much to themselves. Here the children's delight grew extreme. The little lake was of goodly extent, notwithstanding its epithet ; still as a looking glass ; reflecting its border of woods, and fringed at the edge with wild plants, water lily and ferns. The only trouble was to find a spot clear and smooth enough to be a good resting place for Mrs. Ponsonby. This found, after a little time, she sat down with a book, while Mr. Murray and Fenton went off to a dis-

tant point to throw their lines where the fish would not be disturbed by the children's noise. The little girls careered about, discovering pretty nooks, gathering ferns and flowers, acorns and pine cones ; the shores of the lake were full of happy voices wherever they went. At last, with their hands full and pockets full, quite tired, they came back to where Mrs. Ponsonby sat with her book.

"I think this is the prettiest place I ever saw in my life," said Esther. "Don't you think so, aunt Patty?"

"I like the place of our tent yet better."

"O well, but I mean *all* this ; all the Eagle hill top."

"We're not on Eagle hill now ; we're on Birch lake mountain."

"I don't care what it is," said Esther ; "it is just lovely ; and we're having the nicest time we ever had in all our lives. Josie says so. When is uncle Eden coming back, aunt Patty?"

"I don't know. When he has caught fish enough, I suppose."

“We shall want a good deal for dinner, sha’n’t we? I’m very hungry, aunt Patty.”

“Oh so am I!” sighed little Maggie with a shrug of her fat little shoulders expressing how hot she was.

“I have got a basket here,” said Mrs. Ponsonby; “I do not think we will wait for uncle Eden; he is uncertain as to hours when he goes a fishing. Come and sit down and rest, you poor panting creatures, and let me see what I can do for you.”

To judge by the promptness with which this invitation was accepted, the children were very glad of it indeed. They pulled off their hats and sat down bareheaded and glowing in the shade of the oaks and birches; having picked out the best stone seats they could find near Mrs. Ponsonby and her basket. Then Mrs Ponsonby gave them each a napkin and then each a sandwich.

“I think sandwiches are good; don’t you think so?” Esther asked of Josie.

“*This* is,” said Josie. “Mrs. Ponsonby,

what sort of fish will they catch in the lake ? ”

“ Pickerel, perhaps ; carp, perhaps ; perhaps a sort of lake trout.”

“ Did God make all the fish in the lake ? ”

“ Of course he did ! ” said Maggie. “ He made everything.”

“ Did he, Mrs. Ponsonby ? ” repeated Josie.

“ My dear girl, yes.”

“ Then it all belongs to him ? ”

“ No, he made the fish for us, and it belongs to us. Don’t it, aunt Patty ? ” said Esther.

“ I think it belongs to God, Essie. Don’t you think that what *you* have made belongs to you ? ”

“ Yes, ma’am ; but, aunt Patty, God doesn’t want the fish.”

“ Yes, he does ; he wants them to serve the rest of his creation ; he made everything for some use ; and the fish are for our eating, and for the needs of certain kinds of birds,

and for the needs of certain other kinds of larger fish, and to keep the water sweet and good. But all is the Lord's. Listen. 'Every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.' And, 'The sea is his, and he made it.' So, Essie, not only the wild fish in the lake, but the cows and horses at Mosswood, 'the cattle upon a thousand hills,' all are his."

"I thought *they* were papa's," said Esther, looking hardly pleased with this statement.

"Well, but are not all your own things at home, papa's, in a certain way? Does he not take and give and change them, just as he likes?"

Esther confessed it.

"Very well, God is our Father; we are only his children and creatures; all our things belong to him, and we belong to him ourselves."

"As we do to papa," said Esther.

"But what does he want to do with us?" asked Josie.

"Nothing, but to make us as happy as we can be. He loves us, Josie."

"Then I don't see why he lets us be sick, and lets so many people be poor."

"Well, there is this about it, my dear. The Lord knows we can never be quite happy unless we are good and love him; and when we forget him, the kindest thing he can do, often, is to take out of our hands something which fills them. Perhaps it is money; perhaps it is the enjoyments of strength and health. I saw Maggie's mother take a plaything out of her hands, a day or two ago, which kept her from attending to her lesson."

"Does God do so?" inquired Josie wistfully.

"He is our loving Father. Of course he does so. Should he let us go without our lesson?"

“I never heard such things before,” said Josie. “I never thought he was my Father. I never thought it at all.”

“That is because you were one of those children who never live at home.”

“Because mamma travels about so much?” said Josie.

“No, dear, I do not mean that. I meant, that the Lord’s children, those that love him, never feel at home but when they are with him; when they feel that God is with them, and they live in his love and care. ‘Lord, thou hast been our dwelling-place in all generations,’ somebody said a long while ago, and it is just as true now. So I said, I thought Josie had never been *at home*.”

The children seemed to muse upon this. The sandwiches were finished, and a large piece of Betsey’s excellent ginger cake had replaced them in each little hand; but while they munched it, their minds evidently were busy. Finally Maggie lifted up her little face and said seriously,

“Aunt Patty, how can people *get home* so?”

Aunt Patty's eyes suddenly filled. Looking earnestly into Maggie's blue open orbs, she answered,

“Jesus says, ‘Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.’”

“Does he knock at our door?” asked Maggie.

“At your door. At the door of your heart.”

“I didn't know my heart had a door,” said Josie.

“That is a way of speaking. As I can let a friend in, by opening the room door, or keep him out by shutting it, so you can open or close your heart to this Friend who is knocking.”

“I never heard him knock,” said Maggie with her eyes very wide open.

“It is soft knocking, Maggie; the din of

other things will easily drown it. But indeed, my darling, it is knocking rather *felt* than heard. Did you never *feel* that Jesus was telling you to let him come in ? ”

“ I have, aunt Patty,” said Esther soberly.

“ When I hear him next, aunt Patty,” said her little sister, “ I am going to open the door wide and ask him to come in ; for I love Jesus.”

“ Then you’ll know all I have been talking about,” said Mrs. Ponsonby. But she bustled around and was very busy immediately, and said no more.

CHAPTER VI.

THE little party were quiet for a while after that. The noontide sun brooded warm over the woods ; a haze of heat hung over the lake ; and a certain tired lassitude possessed even the young ones, and weighed down little Maggie's eyelids till she almost went to sleep at her aunt's knee. Many a longing look was cast towards the distant figures of the fishermen, too far off for any watching of their sport. At the same time there was a slight stir of the air ; the baked or oven-like condition of things down at Mosswood had no share here ; and the children waited with tolerable patience for the fishing to be done and the return journey begun. It was long past noon when Josie announced that Mr. Murray and Fenton had left their stand.

“ Now, aunt Patty, we'll go home,” said

Maggie with an accent of relief. "Put up your things; uncle Eden will be here in a minute."

"I thought you liked Birch lake so much, Maggie; and here you are tired of it already?"

"Well, I want to go back to Eagle hill, and have dinner. Uncle Eden has got some fish, I know."

"Dinner! and the child has just eaten her luncheon," exclaimed Mrs. Ponsonby. However, she hid her book in her basket and put on her sunbonnet.

Fenton next appeared, with a glowing face, and told what a haul of fish they had got, and "some *beautiful* pickerel;" and then came Mr. Murray with his basket; and the joyous little family took its way home.

They were as gleeful now as they had been in the morning. Maggie was rested with her slumber; Fenton was elated that he himself had caught one of the pickerel; "the second-best one;" and Esther and

Josie were hilarious in the prospect of cooking another meal; cooking seeming to them just now the very rarest of all amusements. So they made little of the way home.

It was so late when they got there that it was already time to begin their preparations. Mr. Murray built the fire; while Fenton cleaned the pickerel, and Josie and Esther got out cups and saucers, and tea and sugar, and plates, and knives and forks, and bread. The day had grown cool again; the air came fresh and delicious over the mountain top; the sight and feeling of the blaze of the fire was by no means unpleasant.

"You are making more fire than need be to boil the kettle, brother," Mrs. Ponsonby remarked.

"O yes, aunt Patty, but you don't know," said Esther. "We are going to bake one of the pickerel, and uncle Eden is going to shew us how; and that's why we want a great bed of coals and ashes, you see. I wonder if this is the way people do when they are

shipwrecked and cast on a desert shore. They must have good times, I should think."

"Shipwrecked, with the ship all safe and sound and full of stores, a little way off," said Mr. Murray; "that is your idea. Quite a fancy shipwreck. Suppose we had no fish, and no tea, and no bread, and perhaps no fire. How then?"

"O but that would be dreadful," uncle Eden!"

"So I think."

"The people would die."

"So they do, sometimes."

"Uncle Eden," said Maggie's little voice, as she laid her hand on her uncle's shoulder, "if God is our Father, and everybody's Father, why does he let such things be?"

"Ah, Maggie, if God's children had not forsaken him, he never would. But when Adam and Eve disobeyed him, they went out from the shelter of his arms. Then were sent forth those horses we were talking about; that John saw in the Revelation."

“Horses? what horses, uncle Eden?”

“We will see, by and by. Just now we must attend to our dinner, Daisy. One thing at a time.”

“The pickerel is cleaned and washed now, uncle Eden,” said Esther. “What must we do with it?”

“Get one or two handfuls of bread crumbs, and a little butter, and pepper and salt.”

“There aren’t any bread crumbs here,” said Esther, looking into the tin box which held their store.

“What will you do then? We must have some bread crumbs for stuffing the fish.”

Esther pondered.

“Couldn’t we break up a slice of bread and make it fine? crumb it up?”

“That is the usual way, when people are shipwrecked, as you say.”

It was very curious work! The little hands managed it, after a time.

“Now put in salt and pepper and a bit of

butter and mix it lightly, Esther. And break in these leaves."

"What is it, uncle Eden?"

"Wild thyme."

"O how sweet! I have washed my hands *very* clean, uncle Eden, before I began. Now what next?"

"Put your stuffing lightly into the inside of the fish, and sew it up. Patty, have you got a needle and thread?"

With Josie and Maggie standing wondering by, and Mr. Murray looking on to give directions, Esther accomplished this, as it seemed to her, very strange piece of needle-work. Meanwhile Fenton had been sent for some leaves of the wild grapevine. Mr. Murray shewed Esther how to wrap the fish well in these, tying them on securely; and then he bared a place in the hot ashes, laid the fish in, covered it with ashes first and then with coals, and came back to his seat.

"I should think it would burn," said Fenton. "Those coals are hot, I can tell you!"

"I expect it to burn," said Mr. Murray;
"the skin, at least."

"Then it won't be good."

"Not the skin. But what is under the skin will."

"Uncle Eden," said Fenton, "do you think that fish will be enough for all of us? I am as hungry as fifty."

"Oh Fen!" cried Maggie.

"Then it certainly will not be enough," said Mr. Murray. "We'll put another on the gridiron, my boy, while we are eating that."

"Well, I am glad," said Esther; "for I really think, uncle Eden, I am as hungry as three people, and Josie says she is. You see, we have been so busy."

"And shipwrecked," said Mr. Murray. "Come, children, while we are waiting let us sit down here and watch the changing lights and colours of the world down below."

"And talk about the horses," said Maggie.

"Then Fenton must get my Bible. Have you got yours up here?"

"My Bible?" said Maggie. "I haven't any."

"Esther?"

"I haven't either," said Esther.

"I have," said Josie, "but I left it in New York. I never do anything with it."

"Fenton, do you own a Bible?"

"No, sir."

"I should advise you to take your first money and buy one. How do you expect to know anything that you ought to know, without a Bible?"

"I can learn Latin, I suppose, without it," said Fenton.

"You can *learn* Latin — yes; but you never can know what Latin means, without your Bible. Well, we must do as we can. Essie, you and Josie read from your aunt's Bible; Fenton, you may take mine. It is Alford's translation; but no matter. Find the sixth chapter of the Revelation, and read."

"Why is this translation different from the other?" Fenton inquired.

“The best old manuscripts of the Greek Testament have been found, or got at, only since the other translation was made. There is no material difference; only helpful little changes here and there. Now read.”

Fenton began.

“‘And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals’” — “What is that, uncle Eden?”

“What is what?”

“Why, all of it.”

“You know who the Lamb is?”

“I know,” said Esther; “it is the Lord Jesus.”

“But what ‘seals’ are these?” said Fenton.

“Turn back to the beginning of the fifth chapter.”

Fenton turned over a leaf, and read,

“‘And I saw on the right hand of him that sat upon the throne a book written within and on the back, sealed with seven seals.’”

“In old times, you know, children, books

were in the form of scrolls, long strips of parchment or paper, rolled up from either end to the page wanted, when used to read from ; or completely rolled up from one end when closed. Such books could be sealed with several seals ; for instance, one seal on the over-lapping edge of the scroll ; break that and unroll a few folds of the scroll and you might come to another, inside, holding it from opening further ; break that and go on, and you might find a third, and a fourth, and so on. In that way, you see, a new part of the book would be laid open for reading at the breaking of every fresh seal."

" Yes. But what is this book ? "

" The book of God's purposes and plans for this world and the people of it ; the secret things which no one knows, respecting each one's life and the world generally. In that book will be answered all such questions as those you sometimes ask me ; why God made the world ; why he ever let Satan go to work in it ; why some people have a hard time and

other people a good time ; why all the dreadful and sorrowful things happen, that do happen in this life.”

“ When will people read that book, uncle Eden ? ” Esther asked.

“ When Jesus has opened it for us, my dear.”

“ And then will *everything* be told ? ” Josie inquired.

“ The secrets of all hearts. And then everybody will see, the good and the bad, how our Father has loved everybody all through, and shewed only kindness and help and love in everything he has done. How he has knocked at the door of every heart, and how it has grieved him that so many hearts would not let him in.”

“ Then he might have forgiven Adam and Eve right away, when they did wrong first,” said Fenton.

“ You have opened the seals of the book, and know ? ” said his uncle.

“ Well, I should *think* so, at any rate,” said Fenton.

“You and I might think a great many things, — and be fools for our pains,” answered his uncle.

“But God was angry with them, sir? with Adam and Eve, I mean.”

“In his way of being angry; not in yours. There is no passion about it. The use of the word means simply a steady and deep displeasure at sin; to shew us how steady and deep it is, he calls it anger.”

“But he turned them out of the garden, sir.”

“Ah! Yes, for God is wise and far-reaching in his love, and tender even in his anger. Yes; then he did what for our sakes and for the sake of all his universe his wisdom saw needful. That is just what we are going to talk about. Read, Fenton.”

Fenton began again.

“‘And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals’ — When will he open them, uncle Eden?”

“By and by; when the affairs of this world are wound up.”

“Not till the end of the world?”

“Not till then.”

“And what are people to do with all those questions, all the time till then?”

“Believe our Father *is* our Father, and be quiet.”

Fenton shook his head a little doubtfully, and for the third time essayed to read his verse.

“‘And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living-beings saying, as it were the voice of thunder, “Come.”’ — Who are these ‘living-beings’?”

“They are called ‘beasts’ in this Bible,” said Esther.

“The word should not be ‘beasts.’ They are described as like the cherubim, and have only a figurative existence. They stand, I think, for the redeemed creation of God; nearest the throne of all heaven’s people.”

“In my book,” said Esther, “they do not say ‘Come;’ they say ‘Come and see.’”

"It ought to be only 'Come,' my dear. It is the cry of redeemed creation for her Lord's appearing and her full and final deliverance. I hear it every day; from the birds and the animals and the weary earth, as well as out of the dark and sorrowful homes of men."

"*You* hear it, uncle Eden?" cried the children wonderingly, and Maggie repeated the question.

"Yes. As the voice of thunder. *You* cannot hear it, my darling; you are not where you can hear it, yet. Read on, Fenton."

"'And I saw, and behold, a white horse; and he that sat on him having a bow; and a crown was given unto him; and he went forth conquering and in order that he might conquer.'"

"I like this," said Josie. "It is very interesting."

"You say right," said Mr. Murray. "So I think. The rider of the white horse is Christ; going forth from the very beginning to con-

quer and save the world for himself. In the garden of Eden the first promise of him was given; there is no doubt but Adam and Eve, and Seth, and Enoch, and Noah, and many others, believed it, and took heart and hope, and trusted in God and became his dear children. And from that time the truth of Christ grew and grew, as the Lord unfolded it to men; and his conquering went on; bringing them out of Satan's kingdom into his own."

"But Adam and Eve didn't know about Christ, uncle Eden?"

"Not all that we know, Fenton. They had the promise of a Deliverer, though, who should himself come of their race, and would break the devil's power and work completely, so setting them and their children free. And more and more was revealed as time went on and people could receive it."

"Why didn't God tell them all about it at once?"

"Why shouldn't I put a Hebrew Bible into your hands at once, without waiting till

you have even learned the Hebrew letters? Before you could read it, the book would be lost or spoiled."

"But how do you know, uncle Eden, that this white horse and his rider — or his rider — means Christ?"

"Turn to the 45th psalm, Fenton; which is always acknowledged to be concerning Christ and his kingdom; and read the third, fourth, and fifth verses. Esther, you must read it; Fenton has only a Testament."

Esther found the place and read.

"Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O most Mighty, with thy glory and thy majesty. And in thy majesty ride prosperously, because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Thine arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; whereby the people fall under thee."

"That don't say anything about the white horse," objected Fenton.

"Only about his rider."

“It doesn’t say it is his rider, sir.”

“We know it is Christ, however, and that he is described as riding to battle, with a bow, the arrows from which will prostrate his enemies. ‘And a crown was given unto him’ — Now read Mat. 28, 18, Fenton.”

“‘And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.’”

“The psalm from which Esther read is written, it says, ‘touching the *King*.’ Then, the rider on this white horse ‘went forth conquering, and that he should conquer.’ True of no one but Christ. Read the first verse of the ninety eighth psalm, Essie.”

Esther obeyed. “‘O sing unto the Lord a new song; for he hath done marvellous things: his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory.’”

“Psalm 110, 2.”

“‘The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion: rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.’”

“That psalm also is declared to be about Christ. Next, read the first sentence of the 8th verse of the 25th chapter of Isaiah.”

“‘He will swallow up death in victory.’”

“Dan. 2, 44. Read, Esther.”

“‘And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.’”

“Dan. 7, 13, 14.”

“Uncle Eden, I wish there was something for *me* to read,” said he with the Testament.

“There will be, by and by. Go on, Esther.”

“‘I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an

everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.' ”

“ ‘Conquering, and that he should conquer!’ ” repeated Mr. Murray. “There is no other of whom that can be said. Now, Fenton — 1 Cor. 15, 25.”

Fenton found and read; “ ‘For he must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet.’ ”

“Then go on to Revelation 11, 15–17.”

“ ‘And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdom over the world is become our Lord’s, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. And the four and twenty elders, which sat before God on their thrones, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God, saying, We give thee thanks, O *Lord* God Almighty, which art, and wast; because thou hast taken thy great might, and hast reigned.’ — Why, uncle Eden, who reigns now?” said Fenton.

“Does Jesus?”

“Why, I am sure, if he is King —”

“Is he King over you, for instance? or Esther? or Josie? or over most of the people you know? I mean, truly and really. For a king *truly* reigns only where his commands are obeyed. Where that is not done, his subjects are in a state of revolt.”

“Then there is no king over them?” said Fenton, and his eye had a strange gleam as he said it.

“They like to think so,” said Mr. Murray.

“But the truth is, that when men quitted the service and protection of their Father, they fell into the arms and under the rule of the devil.”

“Oh, not *nice* people, uncle Eden?” cried Esther.

“Very nice people, — if they are not obedient children of God.”

“But they don’t do wicked things.”

“They serve the devil best by doing good things, and he knows that. They are traitors

in the King's camp. And though they do not think it, they are in 'the snare of the devil' — 'taken captive by him at his will.' So much, that to get them 'from the power of Satan,' is the work of the great Conqueror we are reading about. Read the second verse of the fifteenth chapter, my boy."

" 'And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and the conquerors of the beast, and of his image, and of the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God.' What is the beast and his image? "

" Different forms of Satan's rule and power in this world. Now read chapter 17, verse 14."

" 'These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them, because he is Lord of lords and King of kings, and they that are with him, called, and chosen, and faithful.' "

" One more, my boy. Turn on to the nineteenth chapter now, and read from the eleventh to the sixteenth verses."

“ ‘ And I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse ; ’ — ah, here we have the white horse again ! ”

“ Uncle Eden,” said Esther, “ how did you know all these places for us to read ? ”

“ I have been making a note of them, Essie, since our last talk. The Roman generals, Fenton, rode white horses on the day of their triumph, after conquering their enemy.”

“ ‘ And behold, a white horse ; and he that sitteth upon him is called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many diadems ; having names written, and a name written, that no man knoweth, but he himself ; and clothed with a vesture dipped in blood ; and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which are in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and pure. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he may smite the nations ; and he shall rule them with a rod of iron ; and he

himself treadeth the winepress of the fierceness of the wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.' ”

“The others ride white horses because they are conquerors too, I suppose?” said Esther.

“Conquerors after hard fighting, some of them.”

“Uncle Eden, our kettle is boiling over, — just look! it will put out the fire,” Fenton cried.

“Set it on one side.”

“I think white linen is a queer sort of dress,” remarked Josie.

“Among the Jews, my child, white was always the dress for great times of festivity; for rejoicing and feasting and making glad.”

“Uncle Eden, shall I make the tea?”

“That is Esther’s business. She did it very well this morning, too.”

“Well, I think you ought to look after that fish.”

“So I think. I am happy to agree with you on one point.”

Esther set gaily about making the tea. Mr. Murray raked open a bed of fresh coals and laid the gridiron, with the second fish, upon it; then he carefully removed coals and ashes from the baking heap. The children crowded around and looked over his shoulders, in great curiosity. A very ashy, black, unhopeful-looking mass presented itself at last, where the fish had been laid wrapped in its green leaves.

“It is spoiled!” cried Josie.

“It is burnt all up!” said Maggie.

“It is done,” said Mr. Murray.

“It is a queer looking dish, then,” said Fenton.

“Wait, — you have not seen all yet,” replied his uncle. And he proceeded skilfully to slit the black and burnt skin of the fish, and then to strip it quite off; leaving the inner flesh as white and beautiful as it was possible to be. In doing this he had turned

it out upon a hot dish ; and now adding salt and pepper and butter, he pronounced dinner ready.

The children brought their plates to be filled, with immense appetites and about equal glee ; averring that uncle Eden was the best cook they had ever heard of. And now again the summer day had drawn on to a sweet evening. The lights of the mountains, under the slant rays of the sun, were coppery and warm. There was a sort of hot haze in the distance. Not a leaf moved in the breeze, for there was no breeze ; absolute stillness and hush were upon all creation. So somebody remarked ; and then Maggie called attention to the faint twitter of a bird a little way from them.

“ It is too hot for even the birds to make much exertion,” said Mr. Murray.

“ It’s too nice for anything !” responded Esther. “ It isn’t hot up here, uncle Eden.”

“ I wish we could stay here all summer,”

said Josie. "I never saw anything so pleasant in all my life."

"The air's real fresh up here," added Fenton.

The elders smiled.

"I suppose it is out of reason that a boy should always speak straight English," said Mr. Murray. "The force of his feelings seeks exceptional modes of making itself known."

"Well, but isn't it first-rate?" said Fenton. "And isn't this fish splendid?"

"I wish Miss Eldon were here," said Mrs. Ponsonby; "she looked very much worn, with her work and the weather."

"I wish she were!" said Mr. Murray. "But you have no room in your tent. — I could give her mine."

"O no, that wouldn't do," said his sister. "You must have some possibility of shelter over you, in case of bad weather."

"Not much promise of bad weather at present. West wind, and haze. Rain rarely

comes with those conditions. And besides, it is a dry time! We'll have her."

"How'll you get her?" asked Fenton.

"Send a message by that white-headed eagle."

"And tell him to bring her up?" said Fenton laughing. "What a jolly way of getting up that would be! Why can't we bridle and saddle eagles, as well as horses, uncle Eden?"

"For no better reason that I know of, than because we can't," said his uncle. "The Lord has not been pleased to give us eagles to put in our stables, as well as horses, donkeys, elephants and camels."

"Why not, I wonder?" said Fenton.

"A foolish question, I should say. But perhaps the eagle is to serve us for an example of free strength and activity, and shew us so what we ought to be. I wish I were like an eagle!"

"Why, uncle Eden?" said little Maggie wonderingly. "So that you could have wings?"

“Not for the wings, Daisy. But for the unflagging strength — the ceaseless activity — the keen vision, in the service of my Lord! To be one of ‘those hosts of his, that do his pleasure!’”

“Why, *don’t* you, uncle Eden?” said the little one again wistfully.

“Yes, I do; but not like an eagle, Daisy. Not a bit.”

“Well, you *aren’t* an eagle,” said Maggie.

“That’s true,” said Mr. Murray; and he laughed.

“I don’t know what you are like,” said Maggie contentedly, climbing into his lap.

“Did God make horses, and all those other things, for us to have in our stables?” asked Josie.

“Donkeys and camels and elephants? yes, Josie. And oxen to plough and to draw for us; and sheep to give wool for our coats and mutton for our tables; and cows for butter and milk and cheese; and fowls to lay eggs; and everything else is for our uses. The

whole earth is stocked with the things we want; and the Lord, our Father, prepared them for his children."

"I didn't know that," said Josie. "I thought it just happened so."

"Nothing *happens*."

"But aren't there some things in the world that are of no use, sir?" Fenton asked.

"For instance? —"

"Well, *aren't* there, sir?"

"And I ask, what, for instance?"

"Eagles, for one."

"They give us a grand lesson. No, indeed! And besides that, they have their part to do in the work of the world, in keeping down other races of animals that would else grow too numerous. Try another instance."

"All these huckleberry bushes."

"Huckleberry bushes! Why we are going to pick and eat the fruit of them to-morrow. You will not think they are of no use then."

“Yes, sir; but suppose we had not come up to the top of Eagle hill at all?”

Mr. Murray got up and laughed. “I can’t tell what would be if things were different,” he said. “You are beyond me there, my boy.”

CHAPTER VII.

FOR a wonder, next morning it was Mrs. Ponsonby, and not one of the children, who was first out of the tent. She came up softly beside Mr. Murray, who with his coat off was cleaning more of the fish caught yesterday. As she laid her hand on his shoulder he looked up, and the kiss passed between them that was their morning greeting always. Then Mrs. Ponsonby stood still to look. The sun had been up about as long as she had, and was doing his work in the world with the usual energy. Bright hill-tops, shining little clouds, a clear blue heaven, and a wonderful sweet reflection of brightness from little individual twigs and leaves and blades of grass, carried the sun's messages everywhere. And up there on Eagle hill, the air was so crisp

and cool that Mrs. Ponsonby drew her shawl close about her.

“How lovely it is!” she said.

“Like a new creation,” said her brother. “Shews no signs of age, this old earth and sky don’t, to a superficial observer.”

“Where is Fenton?”

“Just gone for a pail of water.”

“The rest are fast asleep; tired out with yesterday’s work. What headway are you making with the Lord’s prayer?”

“Slow,” — said Mr. Murray. “I hardly know whether I am making any headway at all. This first clause is very hard to make clear, to any but our Father’s household, and they know it without being taught of one another. I hope Miss Eldon will give us some help.”

“Are you going to send for her?”

“Yes. And I am going to put this pickerel down on the coals; so tell the young ones, if they want any hot breakfast they had better be speedy.”

And soon the air was alive with merry voices, and the hill-top was a wilderness inhabited. Appetites were found to be wonderful.

“What a nice dining-room we have got!” said Maggie, interrupting her breakfast to make the observation. “It’s so big, you can’t see the walls, the ceiling is the most *elegant* blue; and it is lighted by a lamp that never goes out and that shines into all the corners.”

“Funny chairs and sofas,” said Josie.

“And a rather coarse carpet,” said Esther.

“The sun is a fire — not a lamp,” said Fenton.

“Well, — so it warms us beautifully,” said Maggie. “And I think the chairs and sofas are *splendid*, girls; a great deal prettier than ours at home.”

“The sun don’t warm us all the time,” said Fenton. “Just come here in September, and see how you’d freeze! And even down at Mosswood, we have ice and snow one third of the time.”

“Don’t forget,” said Mr. Murray, “that this was no part of the Lord’s arrangements at first. There were no frosted fingers or shivering bodies in Eden. These things came in as part of the machinery of the rider on the pale horse.”

“O tell us about that, uncle Eden !” Maggie cried ; and the others echoed the cry.

“By and by ; to-night, perhaps. I was going to say, that if the Lord’s children had not gone out from his family, he would have taken care that their house that he had furnished for them should be always in order. The sun would have never failed to warm us ; and grapes and oranges or other fruit would have hung over our heads, ready for our hands whenever we wanted them.”

“We have grapes and oranges down at Mosswood now, uncle Eden,” Esther said.

“Under glass ; by the help of a good gardener and much money. Nay, the Lord has not taken away all our pleasant things ; but he has made them depend on labour

and painstaking; toil and weariness and trouble."

"Why, uncle Eden?"

"Because of that black horse and his rider — the one with the pair of balances in his hand. We shall learn, when we learn why the Lord sent him forth. But Maggie is right, children; even as it is, our house of this earth is fitted up with all manner of delights for us. This fish wouldn't taste a bit sweeter if we had not worked for it."

"No, not so sweet," said Fenton.

"And see our blue sky! And feel the breath of this perfumed air! And as for a carpet, I can tell you, mistresses Josie and Esther, that you never trod velvet carpets in your life one half, nor one fiftieth part, so exquisite and fine!"

There was a chorus of exclamations at that.

"Why uncle Eden, look at this brown moss," said Esther; "and this lichen, all shrivelled up and black; isn't *that* coarse?"

“And see these tufts of ferns!” said Josie. “Look at these ugly brown spots, spotting them all over one side.”

“Yes, look at them,” said Mr. Murray. “Wait till you can see them. You never saw Genoese silver or Chinese carving a quarter so delicate and lovely.”

By this time the children were getting excited.

“He means he will shew you what they look like under the microscope,” said Fenton.

“Oh! —” said Esther. “But uncle Eden, I want to ask you a question.”

“My dear, I thought you were in the habit of doing that quite freely.”

“But perhaps this is a queer question. I want to know, uncle Eden, why God should make things beautiful, that we can’t see?”

“We can see these.”

“With your microscope, uncle Eden; you can’t without. And other people can’t see them.”

“Well, Essie, one explanation, I suppose is

this; that our Father likes to see them himself."

"Does God care?" exclaimed all the children in great surprise.

"Why else should he make us to care for them? We were made in his image. Yes, Maggie;—he wants to see everything perfect; he likes to see everything beautiful; when he prepared this great house for his children at first, he looked and saw that everything in it was 'very good.'"

"And does he like us to see beautiful things and enjoy them?" Esther asked.

"Why else did he make them for us? The whole earth is filled with beauty; wonders of beautiful things; and no end to them. No end. All for our pleasure, and to teach us what God is like."

"How do they teach us what he is like?"

"Didn't I hear you saying the other day, about something somebody had made for you, that it was 'just like aunt Patty'!"

“ Well, uncle Eden,” said Esther, “ it was my pretty white sunbonnet ; and she knew I wanted one, and she had made it *just right*, and so light and cool and pretty.”

“ Very well. Just apply the same reasoning to the sky and the clouds and the mosses, and everything else. Now I must go send a signal to Mosswood.”

“ What for, uncle Eden ? ”

“ Miss Eldon.”

“ How can you make a signal for her ? ”

“ You shall see.”

Mr. Murray went forward to the very brow of the hill, where it overlooked the river, and Mosswood lay like a tuft of green moss itself down below, with the river on three sides of it. Here Mr. Murray swung himself into a pine tree and climbed up and up, the children all gazing after him, till he was very near the top. There he fastened a long white streamer.

“ It’s fine up here ! ” he said to the watchers at the tree foot.

"May I come up where you are, uncle Eden?" Fenton called out.

"No, sir. In the first place, you cannot; in the second, it would not be expedient."

"How can they know that flag means Miss Eldon?" said Josie.

"You don't understand signals," said Fenton. "A flag may mean anything, if you only agree that it shall."

"Agree that it shall mean anything?" said Josie much bewildered. "Mr. Murray," as Mr. Murray now came down the tree, "does that signal mean Miss Eldon?"

"Not exactly. It means, Benson and a basket of bread. Then by Benson we will send a message, not prettier but more ceremonious, to Miss Eldon, and entreat her to give us her good company up here. Now what else is to be done to-day?"

"Huckleberries, uncle Eden!"

"Very well. Let us go at it, and get that done."

At it they went. Now the whole surface

of the hill-top was covered with the bushes; and the bushes were uncommonly thrifty and well grown; so that getting about among them was in places a matter of difficulty. Maggie kept close at her uncle's heels and picked where he shewed her, and so had an easy way through the thicket; the other children struggled this way and that, as a fine bush or a tempting branch invited them; and many were the sighs of difficulty and the cries of annoyance as the bushes pushed and beat and scratched their arms and hands and faces. However, the berries were in proportion to the bushes, large and fat and blue, such as one could find nowhere else; sweet and excellent, the young ones declared; and they were not soon weary of gathering in such a rich harvest. They picked in cups or saucers or anything, and then as cups grew full they were emptied into the baskets which Mr. Murray and Mrs. Ponsonby and Fenton carried. The morning went away in this work till it was luncheon time; and

they drew together, a very tired, stained, and scratched little group, around the kitchen place of the camp.

"What shall we do now?" Mr. Murray asked smiling, as every one from his place on the moss or the grass where he had dropped down, looked across at the others.

"Luncheon, sir," answered Fenton.

"I'm *very* hungry!" said Maggie. "Oh, I am very hungry!"

"Who'll get luncheon?"

Nobody offered; and then Fenton asked, "What are we going to have, sir? huckleberries? I feel as if I could eat a whole chicken, and I wouldn't object to a pretty large slice of ham with it."

"Our chickens are gone. What do you say to a cup of chocolate?"

A general exclamation of assent went up from the children, for chocolate was not an every day indulgence. Mrs. Ponsonby offered to make it; but Mr. Murray said he would be cook himself for the benefit of the rest.

"We have got almost no bread, uncle Eden," said Esther suddenly.

"That sort of thing happens occasionally in camping out. We have got fruit enough. Fenton, I must have a pail of water."

"If you only knew!" said Fenton, as with a long face he dragged himself up from his couch of moss;—"if any of you only knew once, what it is to go all that journey to the spring, when you are beat out, as I am, and lug a pail of water all the way home—you'd know what it is, that's all!"

"Useful knowledge, my boy."

"What's the use of it, sir?" Fenton asked rather fiercely.

"I'll tell you by and by. Go off, now, and fetch me the water, or we shall have no chocolate."

Fenton went, grumbling; and Mr. Murray himself lay down on the warm moss in the shade, and I almost think he went to sleep; but at the sound of Fenton's returning footsteps he started up and went at his prepara-

tions. The tired children forgot to be tired, and gathered round him to see what he did ; declared the chocolate smelled " delicious," and averred that it looked " beautiful," foamy and rich as it was. Just as it was almost ready to pour out into the cups, a man's head came in sight, advancing up the hillside, and then the man's whole person, and a basket. The children's screams of " Benson ! " and " Bread ! " it was comical to hear. Benson it was ; and bread it was, too ; for the basket being uncovered left to view a provision of delicate rolls and brown loaves, which seemed to say that Betsey had had the party on her mind a good deal. And a bottle of cream gave the finishing touch to Mr. Murray's chocolate. The children eat huckleberries and rolls and sipped the frothy compound, and delivered their minds on the whole subject.

" Isn't it nice, Fenton ? " said Esther.

" I'll tell you what it is," said Fenton ;
" it's awfully jolly. I don't believe people were meant to live indoors."

"It is the nicest chocolate I ever saw," said Josie ; " and I never knew huckleberries could be so good. But these are so large and fat,—just see !—like a small cherry. And sweet."

"I wish summer could last always," said Esther ; " and that we could go on living up here. It's a great deal pleasanter than Mosswood."

"Mamma and papa are down there," observed Maggie gravely. "And what would become of your lessons ?"

"I think we would learn just as much," said her sister, "if uncle Eden was here. Of course I want papa and mamma too. I'd rather study the eagles and the blue sky and the fern leaves, than geographies and dictionaries ; wouldn't you, Josie ?"

"Mr. Murray teaches the Bible," remarked Josie. "That's *his* lesson book."

"Well, I like it," responded Esther. "Don't you ?"

"I think I like it," said Josie. "I'm not

quite sure. There seem to me to be very strange things in it."

"I don't see the use of it," said Fenton, finishing his huckleberries and the question, as it were, together.

"But it is true, Fenton," urged Esther.

"What if it is? I don't like everything that is true, and no more do you."

While Esther was considering this proposition, Mr. Murray finished his luncheon.

"What shall we do, young ones, this afternoon?" he said.

"I should recommend being quiet," said Mrs. Ponsonby.

"We've done work enough for one day," Fenton assented.

"That is: we have gathered our luncheon and eaten it," said Mr. Murray.

"O uncle Eden, but there are a great quantity of huckleberries left," Esther cried.

"I hope so. I stated the proposition roughly, I know; but, roughly, it is true."

"Well so a great many people do every

day of their lives," said Fenton, "and never get ahead a bit."

"What do you mean by 'getting ahead?'" Josie asked.

"I mean, — anybody might know what I mean! I mean, they don't *get ahead*. They just earn, or do, what'll give them their dinner and supper for that day; and next day the same thing is to go over again."

"Why don't they work more and earn more, then?"

"Why they *can't*," said Fenton. "All they can do only just gives them that."

"But they could do more if they liked?" said Josie.

"No," said Mr. Murray; "the people Fenton is talking of are doing the best they can."

"Who are they?" said Josie. "I never saw such people."

"They are sewing women, who get a shilling for making a shirt, and find their own thread and needles. They can *hardly*

live, Josie ; and strength is slipping away from them every day. They are labouring men with large families, who have eight or ten mouths to feed and rent to pay, upon forty and fifty dollars a month in this country, and sometimes upon a quarter of that in England."

"A quarter of that ! Ten or fifteen dollars !" cried Fenton. "Why they *couldn't* live, uncle Eden."

"It is all some masters are willing to give their farm hands in the winter."

"I should think they would want more in winter than in summer," said Esther ; "because there is coal to buy."

"They may want more, but they get less. There is not so much work to be done in the winter."

"I don't see how they live," said Esther. "I should think they would all die ; and the people would have nobody to get in their hay and corn next year."

"That is poetical justice," said Mr. Mur-

ray. "The affairs of this world are not regulated on that principle. But the cases Fenton spoke of are found also among mechanics, who get high wages, but who have sickness and disaster to struggle with. Yes, my girl, and they are found in many and many tradesmen and merchants and professional men, who have small business or poor abilities, and who work very hard to make both ends meet at the end of the year — and don't do it. That black horse and the rider with the balances goes stepping round the world and treading crowds into the ground with his hoofs."

"O tell, tell, uncle Eden!" cried Esther. "Tell us about him. It is just a good time for talking. We don't want to work now."

"*I* don't," said Mr. Murray.

"It's just nice for going to sleep," said Maggie; "or for telling stories."

"I don't know about telling stories," said Mr. Murray. "I will if I can."



Mrs. Ponsonby drew herself into a comfortable attitude for listening; and Maggie crept on to the skirts of her dress and laid her little head in her aunt's lap. Mr. Murray stretched himself in the shade of the pine trees, half resting against a moss-covered rock. The other children closed up their ranks and came near. It was just delicious where they were on the hill-top; a warm breath of air bringing the spice of the evergreens and the sweet fern and the moss all about them. Not too warm; yet the day was one of the hottest of the season, and every living thing down below was panting for air. Round the little company on Eagle hill the atmosphere was softly glowing, daintily languid, that was all. They could see the brilliant glare on all the world outside of their piney shelter; but the blue shadow of the pines fell over their own eyes; they knew that it was fierce on the river and at Mosswood, but they only felt how enjoyable the soft balmy air and the clear radiance

were about them. Mr. Murray leaned his head on his mossy rock, and the children said his face grew dreamy.

"Now, uncle Eden, you are not sleeping," cried Maggie. "What *are* you thinking about?"

"Talk, uncle Eden!" added Esther.

"I was thinking, children, how very, very sweet my Father's house is; and how much I love my Father; and how he loves me."

The young ones were silent a little.

"Uncle Eden," said Maggie, "is this your Father's house?"

"He made it," said Mr. Murray, still looking "dreamy"; "so I suppose it is his, in one sense, though an enemy has got hold of it. It isn't his very *own* house, Maggie."

"Where is that?"

"Somewhere — I don't know."

"What is it like?"

"I can't tell that, either. Only I know that it is lovely and beautiful, Maggie; a great deal beyond this. And it is home."

“Your home?”

“Yes.”

“But how can it be your home, uncle Eden?” said the little one. “You live here.”

“How can Mosswood be your home, while you are up on Eagle hill?”

“Are you going there?” said Maggie curiously.

“Certainly. By and by. Why it is my Father’s house, Maggie; and Jesus is getting ready a place for me.”

“How do you know, sir?” inquired Fenton bluntly.

“Because he said he would. Come, children, you have roused me up; let us go to the horses. Get your Bibles; all you have got. But I tell you, young ones, if *this* house is so good as we find it, the other one will be pleasant beyond all your power to imagine, or mine either. That will be where no unclean feet ever go. Now have you got your Bibles?”

“I’ve got your Testament, sir, and Essie has got aunt Patty’s Bible ; that’s all there are.”

“We’ll have more to-morrow. Find the chapter in the Revelation where you left off, and read the next verses.”

“It is the third verse next,” said Fenton.

“‘And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second living-being saying, Come.’”

“That’s somebody calling to Jesus ?” said Maggie.

“A great many bodies ; all the people that have been wearied with wars and fightings and blood and the loss of dear ones through these, and who have longed and cried for the promised Deliverer to come and make all peace.”

“I should think they would,” said Maggie. “Will it be all peace when he comes, uncle Eden ?”

“When his kingdom is settled, people will beat their swords into ploughshares, Maggie,

and carry their long spears to the smith to be made over into pruning hooks; to trim the branches of their fruit trees and grape vines. They will not learn war any more, and so they won't want any weapons."

"Not pistols?"

"Nor guns. Nor powder manufactories."

"How will people shoot birds or deer then?" said Fenton.

"They will not hurt nor destroy birds or anything else."

"And have no game?" cried Fenton.

"Nor hunting?"

"I think men will not be worse than the lions; and *they* will give over hunting. 'The lion shall eat straw like the ox.'"

"What'll people live on, then, uncle Eden?"

"I suppose, what Adam and Eve had in Eden, Maggie."

"I am glad I live in these times then!" said Fenton.

"You think canvass-back ducks are better

than Paradise," said his uncle. "Maybe you would find others to agree with you. But the people who have seen homes and country laid waste by foreign feet, and husbands and brothers and sons cut to pieces, and who are sore at heart for the bloodshed and misery of fighting, do since the beginning of the world cry and sigh for the Prince of Peace; even those who have not known him."

"Fen didn't read anything about the next horse," said Maggie.

"Here it is," said Fenton. "'And there went out another horse, red; it was given to him that sat thereon to take away peace from the earth, and that they should kill one another; and there was given him a great sword.' Who was it that sat on the red horse?"

"The horse and the rider are a sort of image of the spirit of war, Fenton; no particular man or warrior."

"But there is only war now and then," observed Esther; "not very often."

“Not always very often in one particular country,” said Mr. Murray; “but in the earth, somewhere, almost always. All the time, somewhere, men are fighting and killing each other. Cain was the first to build a fenced town; that shewed the reign of violence had begun. In the days before the flood, the earth was filled with violence. And since the flood,—have you never read history, Esther?”

“The Danes and the Saxons and the Normans fought in England, in the old times, I remember,” said Esther. “O yes, and the Romans were fighting there even before the Saxons. And since; yes, the French and the English were very often at war, and the Scots and the English, and the English and the Scots among themselves. They *did* fight dreadfully; but every people didn’t do so, did they, uncle Eden?”

“What do you remember, Fenton?”

“History ain’t much but battles,” said Fenton. “The Romans were like bull-dogs and

fought everybody ; and there was Alexander the Great and his people, conquering all the world ; and then after the Romans had made themselves masters of everybody, the Goths conquered the Romans. And since then, the Germans have done lots of fighting.”

“ And before them, the Egyptians fought and conquered ; and the Assyrians — and Nebuchadnezzar and his people, — and Cyrus and his people ; they fought each other and everybody else alternately ; and the wild Scythians from the north, Gog and Magog, made a swoop down upon the softer and civilized regions now and then. And all of these ravaged Palestine. Then Mahomet and his followers have washed their creed in blood, in Asia, Europe and Africa. And Genghis Khan and Tamerlane and a host of others have had each their day of laying waste the earth. And among heathen savage tribes, do you know how it is now, little Maggie ? ”

“ It is wonderful, since you speak of it,”

said Mrs. Ponsonby. "The whole earth has been just a battle-ground; and blood enough has been shed to dye all its grass crimson. You cannot think of a place which has not at some time seen the fury of war; and in how many places war has been a constant thing!"

"Did that red horse ever come to America?" Josie asked.

"Why you must be a silly!" said Fenton hotly. "Don't you remember anything? How long is it since there was no end of fighting down in the South? And uncle Eden was down there, fighting, and taking care of the wounded?"

"How could he?" said Maggie very doubtfully.

"The last was harder than the first, Maggie. I remember a young fellow, just a man, who was of an Illinois regiment. He was shot at Fort Donelson. A minnie ball had torn his breast open and cut an artery. There was no saving him. With every

breath he drew, the blood spirted from his wound. His cry was, 'If I could only see my mother!'"

"Couldn't he see her, uncle Eden?" said Maggie awe-struck.

"No time, my dear."

The children were silent.

"Another thing will give you something to think of. In one of the lesser engagements, the officer in command saw that his troops were injured a good deal by a particular piece of artillery hidden in a clump of trees a long distance off. There was in his artillery a very heavy piece of ordnance, an improved and capital gun. He had it brought to bear upon that little clump of trees, sighted by a skilful officer. I saw the shell fired; it made an enormous curve high up in the air and landed in the midst of that clump of trees and burst as it struck. When the engagement was over and we could get there to look to see what it had done, there were fourteen men stretched on the ground round about, literally torn to pieces."

“ Brother — don’t tell such things ! ” said Mrs. Ponsonby.

“ Uncle Eden,” said Maggie, “ I don’t like that red horse.”

“ No, my darling. Let us pray he come not this way again.”

“ Why did God let him go ? ” inquired Esther.

“ How should the Lord hinder it ? ” said Mr. Murray ; “ unless by sweeping men off the earth at once ; and that was not his plan.”

“ But couldn’t he keep people from fighting ? ” said Esther.

“ How ? People are free, and it is one of the ways in which they like to use their freedom. No ; the Lord will not prevent it by his power ; but he will use it to prepare the way for his own kingdom and to make earth sigh and cry for the Prince of Peace to come. So the red horse is doing *his* work after all.”

“ And it isn’t because he isn’t kind, is it ? ” said Maggie.

“Who? our Father? No, Maggie. The Lord hates all this work worse than you and I do.”

“Then why don’t he come?” said Maggie.

“The Prince of Peace? I cannot tell; only because everything is not ready yet. As soon as it is ready, he will come. He knows a great many things and reasons that I know nothing about; and so I cannot tell you any more than that.”

“I wish he would come,” said Maggie. “I am going to ask him to come soon.”

“You know a great many children die when they are very little, Maggie; much smaller than you?”

“Yes, I know.”

“Well. I think that our Father loves them so much, he just takes them up in his arms at once, when they have been a few days or months in this world; and so saves them out of all the trouble and pain and danger and toil of it. For he takes a great many so.”

CHAPTER VIII.

PERHAPS Mr. Murray thought the children were tired, or perhaps *he* was ; at any rate he stopped talking, stretched out his hand for his little Testament, and told them they might go to their own devices till supper-time. Mrs. Ponsonby was thoughtful or sleepy ; the children could not tell which ; and they moved off in a body to the shadow of the tent, where they could be far enough off to talk freely. It was mid-afternoon ; still and warm and soft ; the spicy luxurious air was enough to make anybody sleepy, but such wide awake young ones.

“ I like to hear Mr. Murray talk,” Josie began ; “ he says such curious things.”

“ It seems so strange ! ” added Esther.

“ It don’t seem strange a bit,” said Mag-

gie ; “ only I never knew it before ; but now I know ; and now I can say ‘ Our Father ’ too. I know he made this nice sweet moss just for me to lay my head upon ; and I am his child too, as well as uncle Eden.”

“ I don’t think he made the moss for *you*, Maggie,” said her sister, somewhat puzzled.

“ Why yes, he did ; I *know* he did ; he made everything for me, the hills and the sun,” said Maggie, blinking at them as she lay with her head on the ground, “ and Eagle hill and Mosswood, and all.”

“ Father and mother too, I suppose ? ” said Fenton disdainfully.

“ Those are the best,” said Maggie. “ O yes, of course ! ”

“ She don’t understand, — ” said Esther competently.

“ I understand that this is my beautiful house,” said Maggie ; “ and that blue sky is the ceiling of it, with the sun for a big lamp to light it up. *We* can’t light such a lamp. And at night, our Father hangs up the stars for us.”

“They are always there!” exclaimed Fenton savagely; “by day just as much as by night. And they are not much like lamps; they are big, big worlds, Maggie, a *great* deal bigger than this house of yours.”

“They do not seem big to us,” said Maggie contentedly. “They are just bright little lights. God can afford to give us such lights, you know, because he is rich.”

“O but, wouldn’t it be nice to have a real great house up here on the top of this hill!” said Josie; “a palace, a castle. Nobody’s house has such a splendid view.”

“It would be precious cold, as soon as winter comes,” said Fenton.

“I don’t mean for winter; only for summer, of course. And I’d make a nice road down to the foot of the mountain, to the river; and I’d have my stables and my kitchens down there; and I would signal for what I wanted.”

“How?” said Maggie.

“I’d strike a silver bell. One stroke

should mean that I wanted my horses ; and two strokes should mean luncheon, and so on ; and somebody should come up to take my orders, what I would have."

"Your luncheon would get pretty cold if *that* had to come up hill," observed Fenton.

"O no ; I'd have it drawn up or swung up, somehow, very quick ; and very hot."

"Swung up !" repeated Fenton scornfully.

"It's nicer to have such a little kitchen as we have got," said Esther, "and cook what we want ourselves. Oh, I do think that is just the best fun !"

"It makes your face red," said Josie.

"I don't care ; who cares ? The wind cools it again."

"Yes, but I tell you, you would grow very brown very soon, with the sun and the wind and the fire. I expect mamma will think I am now. And your hands would grow as hard as anything."

Esther looked at her little fingers doubt-

fully. There was one little blister on one of them as it was. Fenton burst into a laugh.

"What jolly things girls are!" he said. "Brown! Why shouldn't you be brown, as well as a boy?"

"You are very rude, Fenton," said Josie drawing herself up. "Beauty isn't expected of you."

"Nobody'll expect it of *you*, that's got eyes in his head," said Fenton. "You might as well be brown and useful, for you won't be one of the ornamental kind."

Which speech however broke up not only the harmony of the party, but the party itself. Josie withdrew, much offended, to the shelter of the tent; and of course Esther went with her. Maggie and Fenton were left alone. Fenton was contriving or arranging some floats for his fish lines; his little sister lay in the warm shadow, with her head on the moss, and a busy look in her blue eyes.

"I like my house very much, Fenton,"

she began. "It's beautiful ; and so big, I don't believe I ever shall go through all the rooms of it. But I never knew it was my house before."

"How do you know it now?" Fenton asked. When they were alone, he generally put off his roughness and was very gentle to his little sister.

"O I know it, because our Father made it, and it must be *his* house ; and I am his child, and so it is *my* house ; don't you see ? And he made it for me to live in ; don't you see, Fenton ?"

"Uncle Eden says it is the devil's house."

"No, he didn't ; he said the devil had got into it ; but *he* can't hurt me, you know, Fenton, because my Father will take care of me."

"I don't understand all those horses, then," said Fenton ; "that's all."

"I wonder what God's own house is like ?" Maggie went on. "*This* is the house he made for us to live in ; I wonder what his

house must be! I suppose, this is like my baby-house to it. We shall go and see it by and by; sha'n't we, Fenton?"

"I never saw such a piece of wood!" exclaimed the boy; "it's as crooked as fury; I can't do anything with it. I guess you made me spoil it, talking to me. Hold on, till I get this fixed."

But to stop talking, for Maggie, in that warm shade, was to go to sleep. And I fancy sleep enchained them all, one after another; for the hill top was very still for some time. When the sun was westering and far down in the sky, there began to be new life and stir on the mountain. All rose up to the necessity of getting supper. Fenton made a fire and fetched fresh water and put on the tea-kettle. Mrs. Ponsonby prepared a chicken for the gridiron. Mr. Murray cut slices of salt pork and stuck them on wooden skewers; and these he instructed Esther how to cook. They were set up before the fire in a row. As they began to

cook and sputter, she took them one by one and plunged them in a pail of fresh water which stood by ; then set the skewers up before the fire again. As soon as they were roasting and sputtering again, this dipping was repeated ; and repeated five or six times in the course of the cookery ; till the salt was extracted and the meat made tender and delicate and juicy. Josie had declared she never could eat pork ; and Fenton had announced his agreement with that sentiment ; but the appetites were very keen, the chicken was only one chicken, and though it "went round," could not satisfy everybody ; and the nice-looking slices of pork were at last appealed to. No more was heard on the subject.

"Who pulled a shawl over me?" Maggie asked when her tongue found leisure. "Uncle Eden, was it you?"

"I was afraid the growing coolness of the afternoon might chill you, Maggie. And everybody had deserted you."

“I was asleep myself,” said Esther; “and Josie; we were asleep in the tent.”

“I went off to fix my lines,” said Fenton. “She was close by the tent. I knew she was safe.”

“Ay, that’s the way,” said Mr. Murray. “There is only one Keeper that never slumbers nor sleeps. *He* took care of Maggie, you see.”

“Why, *you* did, uncle Eden?” said Esther.

“How came I to wake up just at the right time? How came I to go round to the other side of the tent? I did not know Maggie was there.”

“How *did* you come to do it then, sir?” Fenton asked, open-eyed.

“I think, perhaps, one of the angels that were keeping watch waked me up, and somehow directed my steps that way.”

“But you did not see any angel?”

“No. ‘He maketh his messengers winds; his ministers a flaming fire.’ God uses his

angels to do his work of this sort; and I suppose *they* can use all sorts of things in doing it. 'The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.' Sometimes a wind will seem to do the work, sometimes the light of a fire, sometimes the song of a bird."

"Then God always takes care, don't he?" asked Maggie."

"Of his children; yes. And unless he does take care, children, all that *we* can do is of no sort of use. 'Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.'"

"Then it's no use to have watchmen, or to try to take care?"

"Yes; that is your part. The Lord will not do anything for you, as a general thing, that he has given you to do for yourself. But everything else, he will."

"Everything, uncle Eden?" asked Maggie wistfully.

"Everything, my pet. Every good thing. He is *our Father*, Maggie."

“ I know,” she said simply, but so contentedly, that the water stood in the eyes of Mr. Murray and his sister.

“ Hollo ! ” said Fenton. “ Look who comes there ! ”

All eyes followed the direction of his ; and beheld at the very brow of the hill, where Benson had appeared in the morning, the figure of a little mite of a boy. He was coming towards them, and he had a tin pail in his hand.

“ What sort of a wood-sprite is this ? ” said Mrs. Ponsonby.

“ He’s barefooted ! ” exclaimed Maggie. “ I should think the rocks and stones would hurt his feet, uncle Eden.”

“ We’ll ask him,” said Mr. Murray.

The little creature drew near slowly ; his steps were short ones ; and he did not seem in a hurry. As he came closer, they could see that his trowsers ended in a fringe of rags about his legs ; coat he had none ; and his shirt was almost as brown as himself. That

is an exaggeration, though. For himself was as brown as any hazel-nut you ever picked up under the bushes ; face and arms and little bare feet, even his bosom where the open shirt shewed it, were all a clear nut-brown. A very dilapidated old straw hat was on his head. He eyed the party silently as he came near them.

“ Good evening ! ” said Mr. Murray in a cheery voice. “ What have you got there, my friend ? ”

“ Blackberries.”

There was a general exclamation from the children. “ O buy some, uncle Eden ! ” Maggie cried.

“ Are blackberries ripe already ? ”

“ Down in the holler they be.”

“ Will you sell ? ”

“ Guess I will,” said the mite of a creature, “ if you’ll take ’em all.”

“ How much does your pail hold ? and what’s your price ? ”

“ You may have ’em for fifty cents.”

“ Fifty cents, eh ? ” said Mr. Murray drawing out his purse. “ How much is that by the quart ? ”

“ I aint got no measure, of no sort.”

“ How much do you reckon your pail holds ? ”

“ A gallon, I guess,” said the creature, setting down his pail before Mr. Murray, as if he was tired of holding it. The berries were large and ripe, with a soft bloom which had replaced the brilliant surface that blackberries shew before they have attained maturity.

“ Did you know we were up here ? ” Mr. Murray asked as he counted out his money.

“ I heerd there was a lot o’ folks up this way.”

“ So you picked the berries for us ? I am very much obliged to you. How long did it take you to gather all these ? ”

“ I started out this mornin’.”

“ You did ! From where ? Whereabouts do you live, pray ? ”

"I lives on the mountings."

"On the mountings! Is your home on this mountain?"

"There aint nobody lives on this 'ere mounting."

"I thought not. Is your home near here?"

"Not very."

"How far is it?"

"I guess it's two mile."

"Have you been home to dinner?"

The creature shook its head.

"What have you lived upon all day?"

"I haint lived upon nothin'."

"That's hard fare. Why didn't you go home to get some dinner? I should, in your place."

The boy was absolutely silent.

"If you've had no dinner, perhaps you wouldn't object to taking some supper with us. Sit down; come! — you must be hungry after picking all that pailful of blackberries. My little girl wants to know if the rocks don't hurt your feet?"

Still silence. The little boy looked curiously at Mr. Murray, who was serving slices of pork and buttering huge slices of bread and adding the last joint of the chicken which remained on the platter. But when he handed them to the little berry-picker, with another cheery invitation to be seated and eat, the youngster hesitated no longer. He took the plate, went round to the other side of the fireplace, where he could be partially hid, and turning his back to them sat down. Mr. Murray however had no intention of losing him so. He waited a little; and then filled a saucer with berries, sugared them nicely, and as the little brown boy stirred from his place and came back with an empty dish, he was all ready for him.

“Now,” said he, “take this to finish off with; and sit down here, right here; I want to talk to you.”

For the first time the child's lips parted and shewed a line of teeth, white by contrast with the dark skin. He sat down obediently,

and took the sugared blackberries one by one, as if they were too good to be eaten faster.

“Do you like them so?” Mr. Murray asked.

“What?”

“These berries. Do you like them so, with sugar.”

“I’ll bet you I do!” said the mite of a creature confidently. The children about him glanced at each other, with infinite suppressed enjoyment.

“You didn’t tell me why you did not go home and get your dinner, — as any other boy of your smartness would.”

“He wouldn’t, if ’twarn’t there?”

“Is *that* the state of the case? How happens it?”

“Aint nobody to do nothin’. Mammy’s been took sick.”

“Ah? I am sorry to hear that. What’s the matter?”

“I don’ know.”

“Who takes care of her, while you are picking blackberries?”

“Julia.”

“And who’s Julia?”

“Julia? She takes care of mammy.”

“Yes, and who is she? Your sister?”

“I don’ know. I guess so.”

Esther and Josie could hardly contain themselves, but Mr. Murray gave them a warning glance, and went on.

“Where is your father?”

“Aint got none.”

“Are there more brothers of you? or are you all alone?”

“No, there’s three of us when we’re to hum.”

“Two more boys beside you. And do they pick berries too and sell them? Where do you find a market?”

“They don’t,” said the little fellow, finishing his sugar. “Tom gets work down to Canterbury; he’s there now.”

“And the other one?”

"The other one's 'Bijah. He's littler than me."

"What's your name?"

"Jeremiah Stetson."

"But my child, has your mother nothing to live on but what you and Tom bring in? What does Julia do?"

Jeremiah stood silent; either he did not understand, or he did not like to reveal the state of things at home.

"Now you would like to have your money and go. How far have you got to go, Jeremiah, after being on the hills all day?"

"A good piece back."

"Two miles, you said. Could I find your house? I want to come and see you."

"If you hit the track, you could get there."

"How shall I hit the track, or know when I have?"

"You'd know the house when you'd see it. I don't know as you could find the house if you hadn't been there."

“ You charge only twelve and a half cents a quart for your berries ; that is too little, Jeremiah. They are worth twenty - five cents. And that makes a dollar owing to you. Could you bring me some more to-morrow ? ”

“ How many ? ” inquired Jeremiah, with a lighting up of his face which it was sorrowful to see.

“ How many could you get ? I’ll take all you can bring. I have a use for them.”

“ All right,” said the boy ; and he took up his pail to go.

“ Stop a bit,” said Mr. Murray. “ Here is a piece of gingerbread for your dinner to-morrow, while you are getting blackberries for me. And manage to get here at supper-time, if you can, and we’ll have supper together. And one thing more ; tell your mother I am very sorry she is sick, and ask her what she could like to eat, that we may send her something in your pail to-morrow. Now good night.”

Jeremiah went off without any answering salutation ; and they watched his old hat till it disappeared again below the brow of the hill.

“ What a brown little thing ! ” said Josie. “ Is that his real colour, Mrs. Ponsonby ? or would it wash off ? ”

“ I do not think it would wash off, Josie. ”

“ It is the dye of the sun, ” said Mr. Murray. “ You would have to shut him up from the sun for a year or two and keep him close and dark ; and then he would come out white again ? ”

“ Would that make him white ? ”

“ The same process that keeps you so. ”

“ Nothing in the world would bring *me* to that colour ! ” said Josie. “ My skin is very delicate. ”

“ If you were out in the weather at all times, getting your living, my dear, it would soon grow hard and brown, and rough. ”

“ But children don’t need to be out for getting their living, Mr. Murray ? ” said Josie.

“Did you never see them in New York streets?” said Mr. Murray. “Ah, the tread of that black horse in John’s vision has fallen heavily on many a little head. It is less heavy on this little fellow, because he is out on the green hills, where the blessed sun burns him and the blackberries together; instead of New York streets and some New York cellar, noisome and dark, where he would ‘damp off,’ as the gardeners say, for want of fresh air. As so many do!”

“Why does God let them, uncle Eden?” Maggie asked, coming closer.

“I told you, Maggie dear, he will not do for us the work he has given us to do. If it were not for sin, there would be no suffering poor.”

“What did you mean by the tread of the black horse?”

“I guess it’s too late to-night; we’ll talk about it to-morrow.”

“Uncle Eden,” said Fenton now, “you know Mr. Bunce, that was at Mosswood last week?”

“ I know who he is.”

“ He is a great — something, father says.”

“ Well? politician?”

“ No, sir; something else. He says, you ought never to give people *more* than their own price for their goods.”

“ Ought one not to be quite sure first that the price is a just one?”

“ The people are sure to ask enough, he says.”

“ When they can get it. Now I will state a case to you, Fenton, for your judgment.”

“ Well, sir?”

“ Suppose there are a hundred women wanting work of a certain sort; and only work enough to be had for fifty. Suppose I am one of the employers who have the work to give out. Suppose, further, that rather than have no work, every woman is willing and glad to take it at half the price it is worth?”

“ Well, sir?” said Fenton again.

“ How much ought I to pay?”

“How much have you to give out?”

“That does not matter to the question; but we will suppose I have enough to keep a dozen women busy. That twenty dollars a month would be a fair pay; but owing to the pressure of competition, they are glad to have it at ten dollars a month.”

Mr. Murray paused and Fenton pondered. Esther had her mouth open, but Mrs. Ponsonby put her hand upon her lips and stopped her.

“I think you ought to pay ten dollars,” said Fenton.

“Twenty dollars is no more than a fair price for the work. It is not too much.”

“But you said they are glad to get ten. If *they* are satisfied, and everybody else has the same, I should think it would be bad business to give them twice as much as they ask.”

“Would you think it good business, to do work for half what it was worth?”

“But things are worth what they’ll

fetch, sir. If I couldn't get any more, I should think it was good business to do it at that."

"Even if, after paying your rent, it left you not enough to buy bread with, and you had to live upon mush?"

"Mush and milk is first-rate," said Fenton; "and with butter and molasses I think it's royal."

"I mean mush without butter and without milk too, or molasses either. I mean *mush*, with only now and then a piece of bread, and by no chance a bit of meat any day in the week."

"How can people be so poor as that?" said the boy incredulously.

"Would you think it good business if your pay was too scant to enable you to have anything better? if it would not let you afford to pay for fuel, and you had to sit in a cold room and work with cold fingers, with no roast beef dinner to warm you up? If the money you got only just sufficed to clear

your rent and buy your little bag of corn meal, with a few coals to cook it with, and a loaf now and then or a pint of milk for a treat ; and you could not get a whole and neat dress to go into the street with ? Nor blankets enough to make you warm at night ? And if you felt that, what with hard work and insufficient food, your strength was gradually slipping away, and that you would by and by be unable, even at half price, to earn so much as you do ? Would you think it good business ? ”

Esther looked eager to speak, but her aunt kept her quiet. Fenton pondered, and shuffled, and hesitated.

“ I don’t see what is to be done,” he said at last. “ If that is the price.”

“ Why is it the price ? ”

“ Why ! — because there are more people than enough to do the work.”

“ Hardly. Think again. That throws half of them out of work. But surely it does not prevent my paying the full value of the work to the women I do employ ? ”

"That would make the others discontented."

"Scarcely enough to counterbalance the content of the twelve families paid by me."

"But sir, nobody could ever get rich that way?"

"Oh Fenton!" cried his sister.

"Hush, Esther; we are talking business. What way, Fenton?"

"Paying more than other people pay. Everybody else would get ahead of you. I heard Mr. Bunce talking about it. They could sell cheaper than you could."

"Not if I sold as cheap as they."

"Then you would never get rich, sir."

"What if I didn't?"

"Then *that* wouldn't be good business, sir. Good business men always get rich."

"Ah! Then, to get rich, you think I am authorized to keep other people poor. That I may eat roast beef and game, they must feed on mush; and that I may sleep in a five hundred dollar bedstead, they must lie under

scarce covers enough to keep them from freezing."

"I don't mean that, sir."

"What else do you mean? It comes to that. I might go on. To have our houses warmed into summer heat with costly furnaces and ship-loads of coal, those who are paid by us shall work with blue fingers, and shiver while they work. That we and our families may be softly clad in broadcloth and satins and fine linen, *they* shall hide themselves in shabby old clothes that are ashamed of the light."

"I don't mean that, uncle Eden."

"What do you mean?"

"Only, — you know, sir, — that if people don't do as other people do, other people will get ahead of them. And it isn't dishonest, to pay people what they ask for their work."

"And you would say like Cain, — 'Am I my brother's keeper?'"

"Well, am I?" said Fenton. "I thought each man must look out for himself."

“ And each woman.”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Would papa be satisfied with that reasoning, if you threw Maggie over into the mud and left her there ? ”

Fenton stared at this question.

“ You think the cases are not alike ; but they are. Our Father in heaven is the Father of these poor creatures ; and he will make a close reckoning by and by with those who have paid, and *not* paid them. ‘ Behold, the hire of the labourers, who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth : and the cries of them that reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. ’ ”

“ We were not talking of farm work, sir,” said Fenton.

“ Do you think the Lord looks after the reaper, and not after the poor tailoress ? Fenton, he calls it *fraud*, merely to put off till to-morrow paying the wages that are due your workmen to-day.”

“Why, what difference is there,” said Fenton, “so long as it is paid?”

“If no difference, then why not pay it when due?”

“But it is sometimes very inconvenient.”

“To whom?”

“People are busy sometimes; and sometimes they may not have the money just ready.”

“Whose money is it?”

Fenton looked flushed and pugnacious, but he answered nothing, and Mr. Murray went on.

“‘Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.’”

“I didn’t know God cared about such things,” said Esther.

“You did not know he was our Father, Essie. He cares about everything. Here is another word upon the subject. ‘Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and

needy : . . . at his day thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall the sun go down upon it; for he is poor, and setteth his heart upon it.' ”

“ I know they do,” said Josie. “ I have seen a woman begging mamma as hard as she could to pay her some money ; and of course mamma would, but she was just going out and couldn't wait. People are so impertinent.”

“ See here what follows, Josie ; follows what I read, I mean. ‘ Lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee.’ ”

“ What does that mean ? ” said Josie.

“ It means that such unpaid people sometimes appeal to the Lord about it.”

“ And what then ? ” said Fenton.

“ I should not like to say what then. The Lord never forgets a thing committed to him.”

“ But he doesn't *do* anything,” said Fenton.

“How do you know?”

“Why, uncle Eden, *everybody* does this way. Nobody can be bothered to pay people every night their wages.”

“So ‘they cause to go naked without clothing, and they take away the sheaf from the hungry; which make oil within their walls, and tread their winepresses, and suffer thirst. Men groan from out of the city, and the soul of the wounded crieth out.’”

“The money is just as good when it comes,” said Fenton.

“No, it isn’t. Josie’s poor woman did not think so; and God does not think so.”

“But *everybody* does this way, uncle Eden!” cried Fenton.

“Then don’t follow the multitude,” said Mr. Murray smiling. “It will be better for you. ‘Woe unto him that buildeth his house by unrighteousness, and his chambers by wrong! that useth his neighbour’s service without wages, and giveth him not for his work.’ Many a time, my boy, these people are in

terrible want of the money you call it not 'convenient' to pay ; many a time the night's supper and the morning's breakfast depend upon it ; the rent for a hard landlord, or the bill of an impatient grocer ; or a cup of tea for somebody that is sick. You never know what you are doing."

Fenton was now silent, and Esther spoke up.

"But uncle Eden, very nice people often don't pay for work just when it is done ; and nothing happens to them ? "

" ' God layeth not folly to them ' ? " said Mr. Murray. " Ah, my dear, I wouldn't trust to that. God has his own time ; and he says he will be ' a swift witness against . . . those that oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless.' Perhaps no one else knows. People don't always know themselves what they are doing ; and will not, some of them, until they hear the testimony of that Witness ; who never forgets and never mistakes."

“You see, Essie,” said Maggie, “our Father cares for the little ones as much as for the big ones. I’m so glad! I never knew it before. But, uncle Eden — ?”

“What, Maggie?”

“If he cares for them, why don’t he *take care* of them? why do they have such hard times?”

Mr. Murray kissed the little face which was lifted up in its earnestness.

“We will talk about that to-morrow. Now I must make our bonfire, Maggie; and you young ones may go to bed by the light of it. That’s the signal at home too, that all’s well.”

In which thought Maggie greatly rejoiced, and went to bed rejoicing.

CHAPTER IX.

THE next morning was Sunday ; and I am bound to say, the children were disappointed. They had thought their uncle would spend the day in entertaining them ; as no fishing and no huckleberrying could be done. Uncle Eden's powers of entertaining, they knew by experience, were inexhaustible. What was their discomfiture, then, to find that he was going down to the lower world to attend church and Sunday school.

“ O uncle Eden ! ” exclaimed Fenton.
“ Must you go to church ? ”

“ *Must* is not exactly the word ; though you may use it if you like.”

“ But why need you stay to Sunday school ? ”

"Perhaps I shall find something to do there."

"I am sure there is enough to do here."

"I will do that after I come back."

"No sir, but I mean *to-day*."

"I shouldn't do it well."

"Why not, sir?"

"You cannot do any work well, when you ought to be doing something else."

"But what shall *we* do?"

"I shall leave you to find out; and you can tell me about it after I come back."

So he went; and Benson came to mount guard during his absence; for Benson was a man who seldom or never went to church at any time. And the warm day wore through slowly and peacefully on the mountain top. The little girls were quite happy with Mrs. Ponsonby; and Fenton managed to drag through existence by the help of Benson. He did not want to talk about his day, however, when Mr. Murray came back to them;

and Mr. Murray was rather in a humour to enjoy than to criticise. So Sunday ended, in hot stillness, which had been its character throughout.

Monday morning was more sultry than any morning on the top of the mountain yet had been. The sun got up in a red haze. The distances were all dim and ruddy under this haze; and the sky seemed to settle down upon the earth and close it round. Not a breath stirred; and the birds evidently sang more from a sense of duty than anything else. The colours of sky and woods and hills were very warm and rich, though on the hill the warmth was not yet uncomfortable. But the moss and lichens were crisp and dusty; the huckleberries were drying up on the bushes; and even the great trees shewed here and there a brown or yellow leaf. Nevertheless, round the camp fire the breakfast went on joyously.

“I am thankful to be here!” Mrs. Ponsonby had said.

"It's no end jolly!" Fenton declared.

"I'm not a bit tired," Josie condescended to say.

"Tired?" echoed Esther. "I should *never* want to go home again; only that mamma and papa are there. And hemlock is the very nicest thing to sleep on that ever was."

"What shall we do to-day?" Mr. Murray asked.

"Miss Eldon is coming this morning," said Maggie.

"I don't know what you'll do with her," said Fenton.

"That's the first thing, then," said Mr. Murray; "to make our preparations. And you, Fen, may go down to the river to receive her and conduct her up."

"This morning, sir? to-day?"

"Certainly this morning. When could you meet her, if not at the time she comes?"

"It'll be *awful* hot climbing that road

to-day!" exclaimed Fenton. "It's ever so much worse than the day we came."

"Any worse for you than for Miss Eldon?"

"Yes, sir!"

"I don't see it," said Mr. Murray laughing. "At any rate, I have to go in another direction. I must take a walk over towards Canterbury, to see that sick woman, if I can."

"But Jeremiah will be here to-night, uncle Eden?"

"What then?"

"He can tell you what you want to know."

"I doubt it. But suppose, my boy, one of the things he had to tell should be, that his mother had been longing all day for a cup of tea, and could not get one?"

"Why couldn't she get one? There's that Julia, you know."

"But even Julia could not make tea, unless she had it to make."

“ Oh ! — do you think she hasn’t any ? ”

“ I think it very likely indeed.”

“ And are you going to take her some ? ”

“ I should consider it prudent.”

“ She may want lots of other things.”

“ Then I shall hope to find out the fact.”

“ You’d better wait, uncle Eden, till you have a cooler time. It’ll make you sick, I believe, if you go this morning.”

“ It will not make *you* sick,” said Mr. Murray, “ for half your way lies down hill, and all of it is in the shade ; besides the consideration that you never were sick in your life.”

“ But couldn’t *you* wait, uncle Eden ? ” asked Esther affectionately.

“ Think of waiting all day, ill, and thirsty for a cup of tea, Essie ! Come, you may fill my cup for me.”

“ Uncle Eden,” said Maggie, “ won’t you tell me what you wouldn’t tell me last night ? why God doesn’t take care of poor people, if he cares about them so much ? ”

“He does, Essie. He takes care of every one who obeys and trusts him.”

“Not of the others?”

“Why should he? Would you have no difference?”

Maggie thought about it; and then she asked,

“How does he take care of them?”

“He sends his angels, I think, Maggie, to provide them with what is necessary; just so far as the people trust him.”

“Money?” asked Maggie.

“Money, when they need that; and bread, and meat, and clothing; and all sorts of things.”

“I don’t see how,” said Maggie.

“Nor I neither,” said Esther. “Just suppose a poor person had nothing to eat, uncle Eden?”

“It often happens.”

“I mean, nothing in the house; really *nothing*, you know.”

“Yes. It is not so uncommon a case as you fancy.”

“Well, that is what I mean. Would God send them something to eat?”

“He has done that many a time. And what is more, his children have learnt to know that he will do it, and to expect it. I know a case where, when a friend went in with her basket of supplies, she found the table set and the kettle on the hob; all ready?”

“What for.”

“For the dinner and the tea, which the old lady who lived there had asked our Father to send her. She and her daughter were waiting.”

“And had they nothing in the house?”

“Not a crust.”

“What was in the basket which the friend took them?”

“Tea and sugar, meat and bread; I don’t know all.”

“That’s easy!” broke in Fenton. “Of course she knew they wanted it.”

“No, she did not, except in a general way. She knew they were poor.”

“Then why did she carry them such things?”

“She had not intended to go to them at all that day; the weather made it very inconvenient; but she had a strong feeling that she must go. *Why*, she could not tell; but it was very strong, and she went.”

“And did they know that God would send them some dinner?” asked Maggie.

“They had asked him for it, and they believed his promise; and so they were waiting.”

“But he let them be poor?”

“O yes; his people often are poor. What of that? ‘A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked.’”

“I don’t see why,” Fenton remarked.

“This is why. ‘Better is a little with the

fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith.' ”

“ Yes, but riches don't make trouble,” said Fenton. “ The want of them does.”

“ Not where the fear of the Lord is. ‘ When *he* giveth quietness, who then can make trouble ? ’ And I always was of the wise man's opinion, that ‘ Better is a dinner of herbs, where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith. ’ ”

“ But rich people are not obliged to be wicked,” said Fenton.

“ It is very hard for them to be good.”

“ O uncle Eden ! is it ? ” the children exclaimed.

“ What the Lord calls good. You know, he says it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.”

Fenton stared at his uncle.

“ But then he don't let the poor people be *too* poor ? ” said Maggie. “ Those that trust him.”

“ He will not let them be crushed by

poverty. 'Trust in the Lord, and do good ; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.' 'They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.' "

"But are not riches a good thing?" said Fenton, standing his ground.

"Sometimes they are the most deadly poison."

"O uncle Eden!" cried Esther. "When?"

"Whenever they dry up the life out of people. Now, children, I must be about my work. We must get ready for our visiter."

"You haven't told about the black horse, uncle Eden," Maggie reminded him.

"Must wait till to-night, Maggie. Come, Fenton ; you and I must be busy."

And while the little girls cleared away the remains of breakfast and washed the plates and cups, Mr. Murray went to the tent. He despatched Fenton for more hemlock branches. He took down his little shelter tent, and with some nice management and ingenuity contrived to attach it to the front

of the other tent, in such a way as to enlarge very considerably the sheltered space. More canvass was still wanting, but this he said he expected Benson would bring. Then he trimmed out a quantity of hemlock and made new fresh beds throughout the whole tent. When this was all done, he went to consult Mrs. Ponsonby as to the state of the larder.

"We have got nothing left, uncle Eden," said Esther.

"Little indeed, except a piece of salt pork," added Mrs. Ponsonby.

"Bread?"

"Almost all gone."

"I don't believe papa would be a rich man long, if we lived up on Eagle hill," said Maggie sagely. "We eat so much."

"We sha'n't make a bankrupt of him this time," said Mr. Murray. "But this state of the case demands care. I don't know if I can get a bite to-day. I'll take my lines and try. I suppose I shall pass by Birch Lake."

"O let me go too, sir! I caught some, you know, the other day."

“You must meet Miss Eldon.”

“She don’t want me! She can come up hill just as well without anybody.”

“But you want to be a gentleman, don’t you? some day. How is it to be managed?”

“I am not a gentleman yet. I am only thirteen.”

“At what age would you like to begin giving up your own ease and pleasure for the sake of others?”

“Gentlemen don’t do that,” said Fenton.

“O Fenton! Uncle Eden does it always,” cried Esther.

“No, he doesn’t. Uncle Eden *likes* to do things. He don’t give up anything.”

Mr. Murray laughed out at this reasoning; however it gained Fenton nothing. Uncle Eden went away with his basket and his fishing pole; and Fenton with a rueful face prepared to descend the mountain.

“And I hope you’ll look pleasant when you see Miss Eldon,” said his aunt.

“It isn’t likely I shall. How is a fellow to

look sweet, when he don't feel anything like it?"

"*Feel* like it."

"Yes that's all very fine talking. I guess *you'd* feel sweet, if you had to go tumbling down hill and creeping up again, and running the risk of breaking your legs, just for politeness. I *hate* politeness!"

"And love rudeness?" said his aunt gently. But Fenton tramped off without making any apology.

Esther now proposed that they should gather some huckleberries for Miss Eldon, to refresh her on her arrival. Picking huckleberries was a fascinating business, and Josie and Maggie were quite ready to enter into it. One with a cup, another with a little tin pail which had held butter, they plunged into the forest of huckleberry bushes which surrounded them and covered all the top of Eagle hill. It was hard work, though, without stronger people to open the way for them and beat the bushes aside. Maggie was

almost swallowed up in the thicket; and Josie and Esther struggled hard to make a passage way. But the denser the thicket, the larger and bluer and more plentiful were the berries. The children pushed slowly on, gaining a few inches at a time.

"Maggie, you are eating your berries," said Esther at last.

"They are so sweet," argued Maggie.

"You won't have any for Miss Eldon, if you eat them yourself."

"There's enough for her too," said Maggie.

"Not in your cup, I am sure."

"Well, I wanted some for myself first, Essie. I'll pick for her afterwards."

"Aren't they good!" said Josie.

"I guess aunt Patty would like some too," said Esther, — "and uncle Eden; and I cannot pick for all."

"Well, I'm tired of these bushes," said Maggie. "Let's go somewhere and rest; and afterwards we'll pick for them. We'll pick for them all."

"Why, you haven't a single one in your cup!" said her sister.

"Well, I was hungry," said the little one.

"Hungry! so soon after breakfast."

"Yes; I was hungry for huckleberries. Now I'm tired. Can't we find a place to sit down somewhere, Essie?"

"I'm trying, as hard as ever I can," answered Esther. "Keep close behind me, so you won't feel the bushes when they fly back; now we'll get out of them as soon as we can."

They struggled and fought their way, inch by inch, through the thick low growth, high enough for them, however. They grew very tired. Esther's arms ached; and Maggie declared it was frightfully hot. After what seemed a very long time, at last the bushes failed and grew thin; and with a few steps more they stood on the hill's brow, where the ground fell sharply away, and the thin covering of soil which served the huckleberry bushes, failed from the bare rock. Through

the tops of trees which stood lower down they could look far away and far below, to the wide surrounding country.

“Where’s the tent?” said Maggie.

“It isn’t here; I don’t see it,” replied Esther. “I don’t know where we are.”

“Maybe it’s just a little way behind those bushes. If you call, aunt Patty will hear you, I guess.”

“No, she won’t. We’re quite in another part of the hill. All this isn’t what we see from the tent. This looks another way.”

“Which way?”

“I don’t know, I am sure.”

“Then we’re lost,” said Maggie.

“I suppose we can get back again,” said Esther looking over the thicket behind her; — “but I don’t know which way. There is no way.”

“Then we *are* lost,” said Maggie.

“If Fenton were here, he could climb a tree and find out all about it; where everything is.”

"Uncle Eden could, if *he* was here," said Maggie contentedly. "I don't think much of Fenton's climbing."

"What are we to do?" Josie asked with a face of some concern.

"I don't know," Esther answered. "I don't know one bit where we are. You see, working through those bushes, we couldn't see where we were going, and I can't tell which way we came. I suppose we crooked about like a serpent. I dare say we did."

"But what are we to *do*?" said Josie with increased fright. "We can't stay here."

"Let's sit down and rest," said Maggie. "I guess they'll find us, by and by."

"Who?"

"Uncle Eden, and Fen, and aunt Patty, and Miss Eldon."

"They don't know where we are."

"Our Father knows," said little Maggie. "I guess he'll send an angel to shew uncle Eden which way to come to find us. You

know, *he* knows all about it. Sit down, Josie. They'll come by and by."

"Put Mr. Murray won't be back from that place he was going to, till ever so late; not till towards supper time, perhaps. And if it should grow dark here, — oh, Esther, what shall we do?"

"I guess Fenton will come calling to us, after he gets back; and we should hear that, you know. I'm too tired to go any further, — really, I am, Josie, — till I get a good rest."

So they all sat down on the mossy rock; but Josie began to cry.

"I should think you had forgotten all uncle Eden was telling us!" Maggie said, with curious authority. "Josie McAllister, this is our *house*, you know."

"The tent is; this isn't!" said Josie.

"I mean, this whole big earth is our house; our Father made it for us. Now don't you think he knows all the rooms in it?"

“What do you mean?” said Josie angrily.
“I think you are talking nonsense.”

“Don’t you believe he can send an angel to shew uncle Eden which way to come to find us? He can, just as easy as anything. I’m going to take a good sleep.”

Accordingly, the curly little head went down into Esther’s lap; the other two, who felt less faith or more responsibility, sat up and looked at each other. Maggie on her part was rather enjoying the situation.

“I wonder,” she began, as she lay with her eyes looking up into the blue sky, “why all the poor people don’t come out of those cities and live in the country. Then that black horse uncle Eden talks about, would not tread quite so hard. Why we’ve got a very good dinner this morning off the huckleberry bushes, and there’s enough on this mountain for, I should think, a hundred people.”

“A dinner of huckleberries wouldn’t last you all day,” said Esther, smiling at Josie.

“Then I’d go out and get some more for supper.”

“You’d get tired of ’em, I guess.”

“Then I’d make blackberry pie. I should *never* get tired of blackberry pie. You know there are blackberries ripe, as well as huckleberries. And I’d make huckleberry pudding. O, huckleberry pudding is *very* good!”

“But,” said Esther, laughing outright, “to make pies or puddings you would want flour. Where would you get that?”

“Flour?” said Maggie.

“Yes. Where would you get it?”

“Is it something that grows?” asked Maggie slowly,—“or something that is pounded?”

The two girls were so delighted at this question that laughter for the time quite superseded crying.

“Then you’d want eggs,” said Esther; “I know Betsey puts eggs in her puddings. And butter. You wouldn’t like puddings without sauce, would you?”

"Couldn't I get flour?" Maggie asked consideringly.

"If you had money, of course you could."

"But couldn't I *make* it?"

"Flour? No, indeed you could not. It takes a mill, and a miller."

"What do the mill and the miller do?"

"They make the flour."

"But *how*?"

"I can't tell you. I don't know. But you could not get flour unless you bought it."

"Don't poor people have any flour?"

"I suppose they do," said Esther; "or they wouldn't have any bread."

"Those poor people uncle Eden was telling us of, lived on mush, you know. What is that made of?"

Esther's knowledge gave out here; she could not say. Maggie considered the problem of getting a living by her hands, for some time longer.

"That little Jeremiah got fifty cents,—

no, a dollar, didn't he? — for his pail of huckleberries. If I had that, I could buy some flour, Essie."

"You'd want to buy ever so many other things," said Josie, "besides flour."

"What?"

"Dresses, and shoes, and coats and hats. I don't see what use *one* dollar would be at all, it would go so little way. Might just as well have none."

"Jeremiah didn't think so," said Maggie. "And he'll get another dollar to-night, Josie."

"Well, two dollars!" said Josie. "What's two dollars? It's nothing at all. Why mamma often pays two dollars at Clark's for a cup of chocolate, and some little things; éclairs and ice, and so on."

Maggie became still more thoughtful over this statement. The other two, forgetting the whole subject, went into a discussion of others more interesting. Maggie's eyes grew drowsy under the sultry still atmosphere,

and closed at last in a sound slumber. The murmur of voices of the two little girls hardly disturbed the stillness. The birds were hushed ; the leaves hung motionless ; once in a while a locust trilled his sleepy, hot-weather song. Suddenly the talk stopped.

“ Do you hear that ? ” whispered Esther.

“ I heard nothing.”

“ There ! — now — don’t you hear ? somebody’s down there, coming up ; I hear the crinkle, crackle of the branches. There, again ! ”

The two strained their ears and their eyes, at first with doubt ; then a footfall could distinctly be heard at intervals, and the peculiar sort of branch work Esther had described. Then one of the girls exclaimed,

“ I see a hat ! ”

“ Where ? what sort of a hat ? ”

“ Just a man’s hat. There — don’t you see ? ”

No doubt a man’s straw hat was slowly making its way up the side of the hill. Very

slowly ; for on that quarter the mountain was almost precipitous ; there were sharp descents of bare rock and between them rough ledges, all canopied and carpeted with the wild growth of trees and mosses and bracken, but very difficult to go up or down nevertheless. The hat appeared, and disappeared ; more cracking of branches, and then it came into view nearer ; and then with a few rapid steps and leaps the last pitch of the hill was conquered, and the owner of the hat stood still with sudden surprise before the little group of children. Esther and Josie had risen to their feet ; Maggie had sat up and opened her eyes. The young man, for it was a young man, and as Maggie said afterwards “ very nice-looking,” took off his hat.

“ Fairy princesses ? ” said he gallantly, — “ or guardians of the hill ? Have you a palace somewhere up on the crown of the mountain ? ”

“ No sir,” said Esther ; “ only a tent.”

"That's in some respects better than a palace. Do you allow strangers to rest themselves awhile on your premises?"

"These are not ours," said Esther. "Our tent is not just here. We have lost our way."

"Lost your way? Well, let me sit down and rest a bit, and we'll talk of that."

He threw himself down beside them, and tossed his hat on the rock.

"I did not know the mountain was inhabited," he said.

"Only for a few days," Esther explained.

"How do you get a living up here?"

"We live very well," said Josie. "We have really everything that is necessary."

"Do you!" said the stranger with a quizzical look. "But that means such different things from different people. What do you consider *necessary*, now?"

"I mean, necessary for a few days," said Josie. "Of course, we cannot have all the servants up here."

"You have to do without servants?"

"Yes. While we are here."

"How do you like it?"

"I like it," said Josie. "We make a play of it."

"Ah! that makes a difference, no doubt. You would not like it in sober earnest?"

"I should think not! We never do anything in sober earnest. We don't do anything, in fact."

"It is very delightful, to do nothing," said the gentleman; "but one sometimes gets tired of it. I don't know how it may be with you, but I do. I got so tired of it to-day, that I thought I would climb the mountain; and that gave me a good deal to do, I found. But do you tell me you are *lost*?"

"We were out picking huckleberries," said Esther; "and the bushes are so thick, we couldn't see which way we went; and when we came out here, we found we were quite in another part of the mountain from where our tent is."

“And you don’t know how to find the way back?”

“No, sir.”

“It is two o’clock,” said the gentleman, looking at his watch: “I am hungry; are not you?”

“We eat a good many huckleberries,” said Esther doubtfully. “Maggie thought she could live on them.”

“Which is Maggie? The owner of these blue eyes which have just got so wide open? I thought so. Maggie, don’t you agree with me, that one can *not* live on huckleberries?”

He was bringing a little knapsack in front of him as he spoke, and taking out of it sundry parcels in white paper. Maggie looked and said nothing.

“*Do* you think people could live on huckleberries?” asked the stranger smiling.

“Not just on huckleberries; unless one had plenty of ’em, and plenty of milk,” said

Maggie. "And we haven't any huckleberry pudding."

"Huckleberry pudding! no, that is a dainty we could not hope for just here. But my mother was afraid *I* should not find huckleberries enough for my needs; and so she put up some other provisions; and as we are companions in want, I hope you'll permit me to share with you."

"O thank you, sir!" said Esther; "but we shall have dinner at home by and by."

"I hope you will; but this is not dinner, you know; it is only a luncheon. And I have enough for us all."

So saying, he offered his packet of sandwiches round the circle, with such pleasant grace that the children found it, or the sandwiches, irresistible. Presently they were all feeling the refreshment that comes from bread and meat; eyes brightened, and tongues were loosed. The stranger received various details of the children's two days on the mountain; and then pulled out of his knapsack

a peach a piece. The two elder would have refused them, but their friend would not be refused.

“Do you think you can help us find our way home, sir?” asked Maggie, midway through her peach.

“O Maggie! maybe the gentleman don’t wish to go that way.”

“Which way is it?” said he. “I want to go every way; all over the top of the mountain.”

“It is just on the other side, I think,” said Esther.

“The other side of what?”

“Of all these huckleberry bushes. They cover the whole top of the hill.”

“Your tent and camp are on the top of the hill, then?”

“O yes. We got lost among the bushes, and didn’t know which way we went. I suppose we turned and turned.”

“Well, let us consider. What do you see from the camp? Anything of all the country we look out upon here?”

“Not a bit,” said they all.

“We see up the river,” said Esther. “And we look out away over Buttermilk county — far off, to the very edge.”

“The edge of the county?” asked the stranger laughing. “I think we can find our way then — when you are all ready.”

They jumped up at that, declaring themselves quite ready. “For I am afraid,” Maggie added, “that aunt Patty would begin to be worried about us. It isn’t time for uncle Eden to be home yet, I guess.”

They began to struggle through the huckleberry thicket again. But this time the young stranger went ahead and did all the rough work; the children followed close in line after his footsteps, in the way he opened. Even so, it was slow getting along and tiresome; so that a joyful shout from one of the young ones, in the midst of the thicket, called for explanation.

“Do you see?” cried Esther pointing, — “There’s our signal! Do you see that lit-

the white flag? Aunt Patty has guessed we were lost, and has had that put up."

"Over there!" said the gentleman. "Then your camp is quite on the river brow of the hill. I was striking too far inland."

They altered their course and steered straight for the flag; however they had a good half hour's stiff walking before they reached it. Great was the glee of the children then; who poured out in one breath their troubles and their deliverance, their welcome of Miss Eldon, and the introduction of their benefactor: whose name they did not know. He gave it himself now, as Mr. Saulmain. Fenton looked on in much astonishment, seeing that his aunt made him very welcome and begged him to stay and dine with them; and that Maggie and Esther behaved as if he were an old friend. And when Mr. Saulmain took his leave, saying that he was afraid he could not find his way down the mountain in the dark, Fenton broke out.

"I'm willing to have him go, for my part. You don't know anything about him, Esther and Maggie."

"He was very kind to us," said Josie.

"He is a very well-bred person," said Mrs. Ponsonby; "and certainly very kind."

"He hasn't done any very great things," said Fenton. "I'll tell you what, aunt Patty, if he had stayed, we should have had a job to get dinner enough."

The laughter which this speech drew forth from Mrs. Ponsonby and Miss Eldon, somewhat discomfited the speech-maker.

"I tell you what," he said colouring, "it's nothing to laugh at, to clean fish for seven people!"

"We haven't got any fish to clean, Fenton," said Esther, joining the laugh.

"Uncle Eden will bring plenty with him; — you'll see," said Fenton sulkily. "And I shall have the cleaning of 'em."

"*Part* of the eating, too, acknowledge, my boy," said Mrs. Ponsonby. "And Esther cooks them."

“So would I like to cook them,” said Fenton. “Who wouldn’t? *That’s* fun.”

“I wished he had stayed,” said Maggie, “for I like him very much. Aunt Patty, I think he was a sort of an angel.”

But the laughter now turned on Maggie, and so heartily, that she shut up her little mouth and did not explain herself further. Then all waited for Mr. Murray’s coming. The sun was getting far down; the heat had abated; the lights and shades over the lower country were becoming lovely. Miss Eldon declared it was the first bit of real refreshment she had had for a week. They sat on the moss, looking and enjoying and softly talking, all the party being rather tired; till in the stillness they heard the sound of approaching footsteps over the crisp moss and dry leaves. Then there was a stir.

CHAPTER X.

FENTON ran to meet his uncle, and presently ran back displaying a basket of fish. Esther and Josie hurried to make the fire.

“Didn’t I tell you so?” exclaimed Fenton. “I *knew* uncle Eden would go a fishing in Birch lake. Here are some splendid fish, I can tell you! the biggest pickerel we have had yet. How shall we cook them, uncle Eden?”

“Just as Esther chooses; but I think, the quickest way; for I would like my supper.”

And as this was the general feeling, no time was lost. The camp was the scene of a pleasant, soft little bustle for a while.

Fenton preparing the fish; the girls getting cups and saucers out and setting plates and

knives and forks ready; the fire crawling under the kettle, and then, the odours and savours of the broiling fish filling the air; while Esther turned and watched the grid-iron, and Josie made the tea, and Mrs. Ponsonby cut bread and butter. In the beauty and freshness of the sunset time, the fish were served and the little party gathered round them to their supper.

Somehow everybody was uncommonly sharp set that evening. Mr. Murray wanted his tea-cup filled oftener than usual; and for a while no talking could go on except the changes on — “Will you have a bit more?” — and “Shall I fill your cup, aunt Patty?” — and “Some bread, please.” At last, the children grew less ravenous, and Maggie got her tongue free. The first use of it was in telling Mr. Murray their history of the morning.

“Uncle Eden,” she said wistfully in conclusion, “don’t you think this gentleman was an angel?”

“ Well, not exactly, Maggie.”

“ Don’t you think God sent him to take care of us ? I had been asking him to send an angel.”

“ Then I have no doubt he did send an angel, Maggie ; but most likely the angel brought your friend to your point of the hill.”

“ How ? ”

“ I don’t know how,” said Mr. Murray smiling ; “ *that* is hidden from me. But in a great many ways, by a great many means, I think, the angels endeavour to lead men to the work they ought to do, or the way they ought to go. I cannot tell *how*, little Maggie ; because I am not an angel myself ; but it is written, He ‘maketh his angels winds ; his ministers a flame of fire ;’ so I suppose they use all sorts of natural things and forces to effect their purpose.”

Maggie pondered this ; but Fenton objected.

“ It is all nonsense about her praying for

an angel and the angel sending this man. Why, uncle Eden, he set out to come up the mountain soon after breakfast ; hours and hours before Maggie was asking for somebody."

"That's the way unbelievers make themselves fools," said Mr. Murray coolly ; "thinking that beyond the range of their vision there can be nothing to be seen."

"Well sir ; it is very plain," said Fenton stoutly.

"You do not know the Lord's promise : '*Before they call*, I will answer ; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.' "

"What does it mean, uncle Eden ? " said Maggie.

"Just what it says. Often and often, the granting of some request involves the necessity of a long preparation ; and in that case, God, who knows the request will be made, makes the preparation beforehand. '*Before they call*, I will answer.' "

"O, O !" said Maggie clapping her hands.

“Then, before I asked for it, our Father sent Mr. Saulmain up the hill? — because he knew we should want him, and that I was going to ask for somebody?”

“That is what I mean, Maggie.”

“Do you mean, uncle Eden,” said Esther, pressing forward a little, “that God *cares* about our little troubles? that he *cares*?”

“Most certainly, my child. How could he be our Father, and not care? I don’t know what he calls ‘little,’ either. But God’s pleasure is to see his children as full of happiness as he can make them.”

“I don’t see why he feels so,” said Esther very grave and open-eyed.

“A very simple reason; he *loves* them.”

“Then why doesn’t he make them all happy?” Fenton asked.

“As fast as they will let him, he *does*.”

“Then they’d never get sick, and never be poor, and never —”

“Stop, stop, Fenton. As long as sin is in people they cannot be quite happy; just as

soon as they are willing to part with that, the way is open for God to pour in his blessings; and he does pour them in. And neither sickness, nor poverty, nor anything else that comes to God's children, comes to lessen their happiness, but always to increase it. All things are their's; 'the world, and life, and death, and things present, and things to come; all are their's; and they are Christ's; and Christ is God's.' "

"Uncle Eden," said Maggie looking up, "I do love him! I never knew about him before."

"I didn't either," said Esther thoughtfully.

"Now, uncle Eden," said Fenton, "Maggie has told you her story; aren't you going to tell us what *you* have seen?"

"I have seen a poor place, Fenton. By the by, where is Jeremiah?"

"He hasn't come yet. It is earlier than we were last night," Mrs. Ponsonby said.

"I have seen his home, children. And it is not much like yours."

“What was in it?”

“As little as possible, except a sick woman. It is as utterly bare a place as I have ever known used for a human dwelling. I suppose everything has been sold for bread.”

“How came they to such a pass?” Miss Eldon asked.

“It is a common story. They lived in Troy, where the man was employed in some iron works. Business grew slack, and they removed to Newburgh. Then, after a year or two, he broke his leg. A long illness brought them to be very poor; he was too feeble, on recovering, to take up his old trade, and engaged as a teamster; hauling wood for somebody at Canterbury. Then he built this little house on the mountain, where he could live free of rent; and they removed to it. And there, since his death, they have continued to live; having house free, and fuel for the gathering; and contriving to earn a hard subsistence by selling fruit and nuts, and by day's works which the woman

did in the neighbouring villages when she could. For a few months she has been bed-ridden ; and she will never be better."

"What are you going to do for them, uncle Eden?"

"We'll think about that; and you shall counsel me, Maggie."

"There's Jeremiah!"

So he was, with a great pail of fruit. And even Esther busied herself to get him a good plateful of hot fish, and to spread bread and butter; and the children looked on soberly to see the little brown creature devouring his meal with the eagerness that came from a day's fast. Sober little eyes watched him, and brightened when he got up at last, twice the boy he had been before, and came for his money. Mr. Murray paid him a dollar.

"I shall expect you to-morrow again, Jeremiah; and with all you can get for me."

"I'll do the best I kin," said the creature; "but in some places the berries is gettin' scuss."

“Try the other places, then. And carry this home to your mother.”

The pail was stocked, the children knew, with a number of comforts. Bread was there, and butter, and eggs, and tea, and sugar. And over Jeremiah's hand Mr. Murray laid a couple of fine fish as the last thing. The little fellow looked at his hands full in a contemplative sort of way, and then darted a glance up at Mr. Murray which instantly brought the water to the eyes of the two ladies looking on. Yet there was no moisture in Jeremiah's eyes. It was a quaint, queer, indescribable look.

“He's got two dollars now,” said Josie as he walked away. “To-morrow he'll have three.”

“Uncle Eden,” said Esther, “why do you make him work so hard for his money? why don't you just give it to him? You don't want so many blackberries.”

“I'm very fond of blackberries, Essie!”

“Yes sir, but you do not want so many.

Just think! Four quarts last night, and four to-night, and four more to-morrow night. That makes twelve."

"We'll send some down to Mosswood."

"O I guess we'll eat 'em all up, easy enough," remarked Fenton. "They're first rate blackberries; ever so much sweeter than ours at home."

"But uncle Eden," said Maggie pleadingly, "it is very hard work to pick them!"

"Not so hard to Jeremiah Stetson as it is to you, Maggie. He is accustomed to be on his little hard feet from morning till night, out in the weather."

"But do you think he likes to pick berries all day?"

"Perhaps not. It don't hurt him, though; and it is better for him than if I treated him as a beggar. Work is no hardship, children, and no curse. I pity anybody who lives without working."

"Do you, Mr. Murray!" said Josie. "I thought —"

"Yes, I thought so too," said Esther. "I thought papa said it was because the ground was cursed."

"Not work," said Mr. Murray. "Adam worked in Paradise. But work with hindered, uncertain, insufficient fruit, — *that* is the effect of the curse ; that makes the pressure of want ; that is the tread of the black horse in the vision."

"O the black horse !" cried Maggie. "Now tell us about it, uncle Eden. Isn't it a good time ?"

"I see a great many tea-cups, and plates, and dishes, and a gridiron, not exactly in order for breakfast," Mr. Murray answered. "How about them ?"

"O we'll soon get *them* out of the way !" Esther answered cheerfully.

With a will they went at it. The cups were washed and dried, and the other things ; spoons put away ; the remains of supper disposed of ; and then the little company came gleefully around Mr. Murray, dropping upon

the moss at his feet, or nestling to his side. The west was lit up with a great ruddy glow, which the east gave faintly back. In the north the light was calm and clear, holding its steady brightness, while the colours of sunset on either hand changed and paled ; and with that brightness mingled on the other side the white radiance of a moon nearly full. All the lower world lay in soft uncertain outline and shadow, except where the river caught the gleam of the sunset glow, or the hills were cut in clear sharp outline against the sky.

“ This is pleasant, Miss Eldon,” remarked Mr. Murray.

“ It is most delicious ! ” she answered. “ The weather down below has been almost unendurable. It was hard to do anything.”

“ Ah ! ” said Mr. Eden, — “ in Adam’s first home the weather never troubled him, nor made anything hard.”

“ Isn’t everything just as it was then, sir ? ” asked Fenton.

“I think I made the remark that it was *not*.”

“But how could it change, sir?”

“One way as well as another. The Lord says he is going to make ‘all things new’ for his children; when ‘they shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.’ Certainly there has been a change. Adam had no troubles of that sort in the garden of Eden.”

“And no ice and snow, and hailstorms, and bitter cold weather?”

“He had nothing of all that. There were no ‘storms’ in Eden, of any sort. The cold and the heat, of which you speak, are some of the things that have made labour so uncertain and so difficult.”

“Read about the black horse, uncle Eden,” said Maggie; “and then we shall understand it.”

“Did you bring the Bibles, Miss Eldon?”

“She hadn’t room for ’em, and there are

only two here," said Fenton. "I've got yours, uncle Eden. Here is the place.— 'And when he opened the third seal, I heard the third living-being say, Come. And I saw, and lo a black horse; and he that sat on him having a balance in his hand. And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living-beings, saying, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not.'"

"Now what is it, uncle Eden?" asked Maggie, with eyes intent and serious.

"The red horse was a sort of image of war and bloodshed, Maggie."

"Yes, uncle Eden; I understood all that."

"So the black horse stands for the daily want-pressure, which is bearing the hearts and heads of humanity so heavily down. You know nothing about it, children."

"What is this about the wheat and the barley?" said Fenton.

"The 'measure' of wheat spoken of there

is in the original a 'chœnix'; and a chœnix of wheat was held to be an ordinary day's ration for a soldier; while the *penny* was a 'denarius'; his ordinary day's pay. So the meaning is, a man's daily labour shall generally suffice to get his daily bread. There shall be a chœnix for a denarius."

"But three chœnixes of barley," said Fenton.

"Barley is cheaper grain. A poor man with a family, earning his denarius a day, might be unable to get anything better, as he would need more than for himself."

"Uncle Eden, you said 'generally.' Isn't people's daily labour *always* enough to get their daily bread with? — just bread?"

"Not always, Essie. How if a man be ill, and able to do but half a month's work in a month? Or how if he be feeble, and able to earn but half a denarius a day? And sometimes, my dear, work fails; a factory stops; the demand for some article ceases, or the supply of some material is cut off; or some

rich man is ruined and his hands miss their earnings."

"And do those things happen often?"

"Very often. Every day. Still, *generally*, where people are industrious and prudent, and contrive to lay up a little for a wet day, they make both ends meet at the end of the year."

"But a great many people are rich," said Fenton; "a *great many* people."

"A great many rich people are poor, I can tell you," said his uncle, "and work as hard as any labourer to keep things going. There are exceptions; nevertheless, take the world over, Fenton, and things are as I tell you."

"What does the 'balance' mean? why does the rider on the black horse hold a balance?"

"Do you know what a balance is, in the first place?"

"I don't," said Josie.

"I should think I did!" said Fenton.

“Isn’t it the same thing as what Betsey calls her *scales*?”

“To be sure it is; and the use of it is to weigh things. When bread is given out by weight, that is a sign it is scarce. In times of great plenty people are not so careful. But imagine that we were obliged at Mosswood to deal out our bread by the help of Betsey’s scales; so many ounces to each person?”

“O how dreadful!” Esther exclaimed. “Do poor people do so?”

“Not always exactly so. But the balance is the sign of scarcity. Turn to Leviticus 26.26, Essie, and see what it says.”

Esther found and read. “‘And when I have broken the staff of your bread, ten women shall bake your bread in one oven, and they shall deliver you your bread again by weight: and ye shall eat, and not be satisfied.’ Why should ten women bake in one oven, uncle Eden?”

“They would have such small bakings,

one oven would do for ten families. Now find the fourth of Ezekiel, and read the 16th verse."

" ' Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, behold, I will break the staff of bread in Jerusalem: and they shall eat bread by weight, and with care; and they shall drink water by measure, and with astonishment.' "

" That shews you what the sign of the balance means; not *famine*, in this case, but the struggle and the difficulty of daily bread; the pressure of want, all over the world."

" Do you mean, that people are struggling, all over the world? " inquired Fenton.

" I mean just that."

" For daily bread? "

" For daily bread. Not always to-day earning to-morrow's dinner, though very often; but constantly providing one month or one year for the next."

" In this country? "

" In all countries, my boy, speaking generally; from the Laplander, fishing for blub-

ber among the icebergs, to the South Sea Islander, planting his yams and gathering in his cocoanuts and bananas."

"But in New York, uncle Eden, among such people as *we* know; they are not struggling."

"How do you know?"

"They don't *look* so, sir," said Fenton with a little of an injured manner.

"You do not see them at their business, my boy. The life of a South Sea Islander among his sweet potatoes and cocoanuts, is ease itself, compared with the life of New York men of business. And a New York professional man in good practice is toiling day and night; one in want of practice, I need not tell you, has worse struggles yet."

"What's the reason?" was Fenton's next inquiry.

"They are trying to make money, to keep themselves and their families from all need of struggling."

"Then do you think it is better to be a

South Sea Islander, uncle Eden?" said Maggie, so wistfully that they all laughed.

"I believe I have not expressed any opinion, Maggie. But I want you to notice, that the voice in the vision — read the verse again, Fenton."

"‘And I heard as it were a voice in the midst of the four living-beings, saying, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and the oil and the wine hurt thou not.’"

"Well — the voice, I want you to notice, which in the vision John heard giving the order to the rider on the black horse, directed that in all this pressure of want and struggle for supply, there should be the bread for the getting: ‘a chœnix for a denarius;’ food for the striving, all the world over. So there is. And more than that. There is the oil and the wine."

"What for?" said Fenton.

"You know those two articles were greatly used with their bread by the Easterns; they

stand, I suppose, for certain comforts and luxuries of life which are mostly within the reach of even the struggling poor, when industrious and honest."

"But you don't drink wine, uncle Eden?" said Maggie.

"Nor dip my bread in oil. But the people of Palestine and Arabia do both. So wine and oil stand for common luxuries. Even poor people there will have their one or two olive trees, and feast off them; and poor people here, you know, manage to get their cup of tea and their bit of meat for dinner, and a little sugar and butter. And fruits are for all; even brown little Jeremiah fills himself with blackberries."

"Does that make him so brown?" inquired Maggie. But the shout of the rest almost bewildered her.

"I fancy the sun alone is responsible for that, Maggie."

"But O, uncle Eden!" said the little girl, "what does he do when there are no black-

berries, nor huckleberries? Peaches don't grow in the woods, do they?"

"Not in our country."

"What do you suppose Jeremiah does then?"

"What many others do; goes sometimes with an empty stomach; and grows thin upon it."

"I don't believe blackberries would make him fat," said Maggie. "I eat a *great* many blackberries, this morning, uncle Eden; and yet I was hungry for Mr Saulmain's sandwiches. And I was very hungry for dinner."

"I don't understand it," said Fenton.

"What?"

"All this about struggling. There's food enough. Why, at the West, uncle Eden, they burn corn instead of coal sometimes; I heard somebody telling papa; ripe ears of corn."

"There is food enough, as you say. The thing is, to get it."

"Anybody can get it!" said Fenton stoutly.

"Suppose you were a poor washer-woman, doing washing, like one I knew, for the students of a Southern University; and allowed by the regulations only a dollar and twenty five cents a month for each one."

"For each man's washing, do you mean?"

"Yes; he to put in the wash what he chose, and she to find the soap and starch for her laundry work. Calculate how well you could support a family with that; keep your own fire and buy your own meat, to nourish up strength enough to carry the clothes home when they were done? And how would it be if you were sick a week or two, and could not work?"

"And yet, *that* is not an extreme case," said Mrs. Ponsonby.

"What is an extreme case, aunt Patty?" said Esther.

"Think of standing in the snow and freezing cold, hour by hour, to sweep a crossing.

Think of the few pennies collected in one day from the passers-by, and of going home to provide supper and breakfast and dinner for a sick mother and two or three little brothers and sisters."

"But how *can* they?" said Esther, looking troubled.

"A few pennies won't buy more than a little sponge cake, or two éclairs," said Josie.

"*That* wouldn't be much of a dinner for anybody," said Fenton scornfully.

"Think of another case," Mrs. Ponsonby went on. "Think of a poor woman keeping a fruit stall at some street corner. She buys her apples and nuts and oranges at wholesale prices, and depends for her living upon the pennies of profit. She must have good custom to make much. And in all weathers there she is at the street corner. Under the beating sun, through the live-long summer day, with a big umbrella over her; and tucking her hands under her shawl to keep them

comfortable when the autumn cold and the winter's frost are biting. Perhaps *she* has one or two little children at home to feed."

"Who takes care of them all day?" inquired Maggie.

"Nobody. She must just leave them alone; perhaps locked up, for safety."

"Those people are *very* poor," said Fenton. "The world is not full of such poor people. At Appleborough, now, uncle Eden, everybody lived in decent houses and had good farms."

"Yes; but a great many farmers and farmers' wives go crazy from the pressure of work and anxiety; more than from almost any other class of people."

"Why?"

"They are watching the winds, and the rains, and the sun, all the while; anxious about their crops. And they work hard, early and late."

"They needn't," said Fenton.

"Yes, they need; if they would send their

daughters to have the best schooling there is in the land, and if they will put their sons at college and train them for the learned professions."

"Do they?"

"Yes, they do. I could tell you of some dear friends of mine, charming people, who lived in a far-off little village of New England. Their grown-up sons and daughters were away at school and at college, only two younger ones at home; the father was a minister, with a very small salary and a very small farm. To give their children an education, the utmost economy at home was needful; and so they bought nothing they could help. Meat they rarely eat; I suppose never, in summer, unless a bit of salt pork once a month or so; and white bread they made almost as rarely. They lived upon what the farm and garden gave them. I have dined there upon green corn; and at another season upon potatoes."

"*Just* green corn. aunt Patty?"

“ Yes, Maggie ; without butter, and without bread, and without anything, except salt. All the time of corn they lived upon green corn ; then in potato time they lived upon potatoes ; and upon fruits in their season.”

“ I don’t think they could live upon blackberries,” said Maggie.

“ I don’t see,” said Esther slowly, “ if God is our Father, why he lets such things happen ! ”

“ Nor I don’t,” said Fenton.

“ But I *know* he is our Father,” said Maggie’s little voice.

Mr. Murray sighed.

“ It is the curse that came because of sin,” he said. “ And yet, children, though it *is* a curse, I do believe it is chosen by our Father, as one of the best ways to prepare the coming of Christ’s kingdom. If there were no trouble, if there were no want, if all went well, who would think of God ? ”

“ Don’t rich people think of him ? ” said Fenton.

“Very little indeed.”

“Why don’t they, uncle Eden?” asked Esther.

“They don’t want anything, Essie. They are strong, and sufficient to themselves, and proud; they do not choose dependence, nor like to own themselves helpless.”

“Then there wouldn’t be many rich Christians,” said Fenton, “if that were true.”

“There are not, my boy. Jesus said it was hardly possible for a rich man to be one of his disciples.”

“And that is why he lets so many people be poor?” said Maggie.

“I suppose so, my pet. So you see why the tread of that black horse should make all Creation cry, Come!”

CHAPTER XI.

THERE were sound sleepers that night in the little tent; for the children were tired with their walk, and Miss Eldon exhausted with the heats at Mosswood; and even Mr. Murray and Fenton, out under the stars, slept the sweetest kind of sleep. So they all got up very fresh the next morning, and were very lively at breakfast. Maggie's thoughts however went back to Jeremiah.

"Uncle Eden," she said, while they were all busy with tea and bread and butter and broiled fish and rashers of pork, "do tell us exactly what you saw at that little house where you went yesterday."

"Not very difficult," said Mr. Murray; "I saw so little."

"What?"

“A sick woman on a very scantily furnished bed.”

“What do you mean by ‘scantily furnished,’ uncle Eden?”

“Well — there was no sheet, that I could see; and only a bit of ragged blanket, very dirty, and an equally forlorn quilt.”

“Why don’t they wash them?” said Fenton.

“Who?”

“The people there.”

“One of ‘the people there’ is bed-ridden and will never wash clothes again nor do anything else. Julia, her daughter, is not strong enough to bring water from the spring, which is half a quarter of a mile off.”

“How do they get water then?”

“They do not, for washing, except when there comes a heavy rain and they catch the drip from the roof in tubs and pails. Jeremiah brings a pailful for drinking, every day.”

“What else did you see, uncle Eden?”

“Four wooden chairs, I think ; and one deal table. That about sums up the furniture. In an open cupboard I saw a small stock of crockery ; one teacup and two broken pitchers ; and, I think, a couple of tumblers. There was something else, which might have been a bowl or a sugar cup ; I did not examine.”

“And was that all ? ”

“That was all I remember ; the whole in the condition, pretty much, that I described as belonging to the bedclothes. And the woman, Maggie, is an ignorant woman no doubt ; but I think she is truly a child of our Father, and loves and trusts him.”

“I thought you said he takes care of those who are his children ? ” said Fenton.

“Well ? ”

“Well, sir ; — he don’t seem to have taken care of this one.”

“You are hasty at conclusions. How came you to persuade me to come camping on Eagle Hill ? and how came little Jeremiah

to hear of us, and bring his pail of blackberries to us the other night ? ”

Maggie clapped her hands.

“ Then *that* was the reason we came up to camp out on Eagle Hill ! ” she cried ; “ and *that* was the reason the weather was so awful hot. Did one of the angels make it to be so hot, on purpose, uncle Eden ? ”

“ One of the angels ! ” repeated Fenton.

“ Take care, both of you,” said Mr. Murray ; “ or you will make two mistakes. Maggie must remember that the Lord’s works fit and serve a great many purposes at once ; and Fenton must not think that the smallest of them is forgotten before God. He is the Father of all ; he does not take care of one, but of all ; the hot days which drove us up here, have been ripening cornfields at the West to supply hundreds of thousands with food by and by ; they have been bringing on the peaches and grapes, the apples and pears, all over the land ; they have been making some sick people well, and some well people

ill ; and they have brought us here certainly to take care of a poor suffering woman and a helpless little child."

"That's what I thought!" said Maggie.
"You see, Fenton."

"I never heard of such things before," said Josie.

"Jeremiah is earning a dollar a day," said Fenton somewhat doggedly. "I don't see what *he* wants."

"It must be *dreadful* hard work, Fenton," said Maggie.

"No ; not to him," said Mr. Murray.
"If the blackberries could last, and the market be sure, Jeremiah could get his living and his mother's too. But until the other night, he has earned only a dollar and a half in two weeks. Three people have had to live upon that."

"Not a shilling a day," said Fenton.

"I am always very sorry," said Mrs. Ponsonby, "for a little child whom that black horse has trodden on!"

“What do you mean, aunt Patty?”

“You would know, if you could see the state of things in English factory towns, as it was fifty years ago. There children of ten years old were put in the factories and kept at work fourteen hours a day; with only a half hour allowed for their dinner.”

“And no time for play?” asked Maggie.

“Those children never played. You think it is a good deal, Fenton, to be from nine till three in school, with a good little time for refreshment at twelve o’clock. Fancy standing at a cotton loom from six o’clock in the morning till eight at night; with only a half hour to rest.”

“How *could* they, uncle Eden?” said Maggie with incredulous eyes.

“They could not without great injury. Three or four years often made an end of them; and in some factories a fourth part, or more, of the children were deformed or crippled or somehow injured for life by excessive work or ill treatment.”

“Don’t talk about it, brother!” said Mrs. Ponsonby. “It makes me sick.”

“I wouldn’t do it, if I were in their place,” said Fenton.

“Ah, you would. For the overseers carried heavy leather whips, and used them unmercifully. Of course nothing else would have made little children do anything so unnatural.”

“Had all those children no mothers and fathers?” Maggie asked.

“Their fathers were so poor, they could not resist the possibility of adding to their scanty means. Or perhaps they were brutal and vicious, as the *very* poor are sadly tempted to be. Want makes them hard.”

“And is it so bad *now*, uncle Eden?”

“No, I believe not, Maggie. I believe the children are not allowed by the law to enter the factories before they are twelve years old.”

“But I am almost that!” said Esther.

“O uncle Eden, I wish it could be *quite* stopped!” said Maggie beginning to cry.

“It will be stopped when the Lord appears the next time. Let us cry ‘Come!’”

“Why does he let people do such cruel things?”

“He likes it less than you do, Maggie. But he has made us free to do right or to do wrong; and people choose to do wrong. He will set it all straight by and by.”

“But he needn’t have sent that black horse out at all,” said Fenton. “He needn’t have cursed the ground and made it hard for men to get a living.”

“It is not his doing, this I have been telling you of. *He* has ordered that there shall be ‘a chœnix for a denarius,’ you remember; and forbidden the oil and the wine to be hurt. No; but it is the work of men’s selfishness and greed of money. And the Lord has commanded his people to look after the poor; and men are swallowed up in the enjoyment of their own, or in the effort to increase it. ‘All seek their own.’”

"What are you going to do for this poor sick woman, uncle Eden?" said Maggie.

"What will you all help me do? And how much do you think we ought to try to do? I put the case in your hands."

Mr. Murray threw himself back on the moss, in the shade of the trees, and clasping his hands under his head, seemed, as he said, to have given up the case into the charge of the young ones. Maggie looked intensely wise. Fenton whipped the moss with a stick in a way that looked somewhat impatient. Esther and Josie were grave and considering.

"Aren't you going a fishing, sir? — uncle Eden?" said Fenton.

"There is another cause before the court," said Mr. Murray without stirring. "I wait to hear suggestions."

"I should say, give the woman five dollars," said Fenton.

"But Fenton —" said Esther.

"Well?"

“What will she do when the five dollars are gone?”

“I don’t know! You aren’t bound to make her comfortable for ever, are you?”

“But how much would five dollars do?” said Esther.

“Very little indeed,” Josie went on. “Just think, — she wants *everything*.”

“Ten dollars, then,” said Fenton.

“Well now, let us see,” began Esther. “Let us see how much ten would do. What does a pound of tea cost, aunt Patty?”

“Say, twelve shillings.”

“A dollar and a half. How much does a barrel of flour cost?”

“A *barrel* of flour!” said Fenton. “A barrel of flour would last them a year.”

“No, it would not,” answered his aunt. “It might last them a quarter.”

“Well, three months!” cried Fenton.

“What is three months?” answered

Esther. "Do you not want to keep them alive more than three months?"

"I don't see why we are to do it all," said Fenton.

"What do you mean, you impatient boy? I am trying to find out how far ten dollars would go."

"Well!" said Fenton throwing himself down on the rock. "Go ahead! I wanted to get off to our fishing *some* time in the day."

"I won't take long," said Esther. "Aunt Patty, what can you get a barrel of flour for?"

"Inferior flour, from ten to twelve dollars."

"Ten to twelve!" exclaimed Esther. "Then they couldn't get but half a barrel; and that, with the tea, would take six and a half dollars. That wouldn't leave much. There's only three and a half dollars to get sheets and nightgowns and meat and butter and potatoes and milk!"

"We can't do the whole, I told you," said Fenton, lying on his back with a discontented countenance.

"Who's going to do the rest, Fenton?" inquired little Maggie.

"I should think there were other people in the world that had money, besides papa."

"I am not going to your papa at all about it," said Mr. Murray; "nor you neither."

"I thought you asked us to help, sir."

"That's another affair. I offer you the privilege of helping me — if you like."

"I don't see the difference," said Fenton. "All the money *we* have, comes from papa."

"You are not to ask him for a penny. That would be his help, not yours. What you choose to do without him is the question."

"How much *ought* we to do?" Esther asked, a little timidly.

"That is as you look at it; depends on your will, and your means, and your wits."

"I can't see what *wits* have to do with helping a poor woman," said Fenton.

"Quite as much as money."

"But I meant, uncle Eden," said Esther, "how much ought to be done? how much are you going to do for her, at all?"

"Judge for yourself, Essie, my dear; apply the rules to the case."

"What rules, uncle Eden?" said Maggie.

"Who has got a Testament, or a Bible?"

"Nobody, sir; they are in the tent."

"Go and get mine, Fenton."

Fenton ran through the sun between the shade of the trees and the shade of the tent, and ran back again; declaring, as he threw himself down in his place, that the heat was "stunning."

"Find the seventh chapter of Matthew, the twelfth verse; and read."

"'Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets.'"

“ ‘*Therefore,*’ ” repeated Mr. Murray.
“ What is the reason given for our acting so ? ”

Fenton read the preceding verse.

“ Because our Father in heaven is so ready to give us good things. If he has filled our hands full, ought we not to fill other people’s hands ? ”

“ Then ours wouldn’t be full any more,” said Fenton.

“ I beg your pardon. Nobody ever grew poor that way. But read one passage more. It is in 2 Cor., the ninth chapter, sixth and seventh verses. Then you may consult together at your pleasure.”

Fenton read again.

“ ‘ But remember this. He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly ; and he which soweth with blessings shall reap also blessings. Each man according as he purposeth in his heart ; not grudgingly, or of necessity ; for God loveth a cheerful giver.’ Each *man* ; it doesn’t say anything about children, sir.”

“Children are not shut out. Now, Essie, you are in position to consider the matter.”

“I don’t know how, uncle Eden.”

“All you have to do, is to think what, if you were in that sick woman’s place, you would like people to do for you.”

There was a pause.

“I should want a great deal done for me, uncle Eden.”

“Let us hear.”

“I should want first to have that dirty bed made clean and comfortable. It must be dreadful to be sick and not have a good bed.”

“Very well. What next?”

“Next, she would want tea, and lemonade, and grapes, and custards, and jelly, and ice cream,” said Josie.

“No,” said Esther; “before that, I should like to have clean things on, and to be *clean*, all about me.”

“I should think she would want gruel,” said Maggie.

"She is not sick of a fever; she could enjoy all those refreshing and nourishing things Josie has enumerated, if she could get them."

"Beefsteak, then," said Esther. "And nice bread to make toast of, I suppose; and very nice butter; and cream; for when one is sick one wants things particularly nice. And all sorts of fruit, I suppose, uncle Eden? That is what *I* should like."

"And wouldn't you like candles, or oil, in the house, that a light at night would be possible, if desired?"

"O yes, sir. O hasn't she that, uncle Eden?"

"I am afraid she has no comforts whatever."

There was another thoughtful pause; during which Fenton kicked his heels more than was absolutely necessary.

"I don't think of anything else in particular, uncle Eden."

"Go on, Essie, and all of you. Let me

know what each one purposes to do, and then I shall know my own part. There is no obligation, children, except the obligation of love."

"Isn't there the obligation of those words I read, sir?" inquired Fenton.

"That is the obligation of love. Do you think that the spirit of those words would be met by *grudging* compliance?"

Fenton kicked his heels more vigorously. Esther and the others looked very solemn.

"I do not know what we can do, uncle Eden," said Maggie at length. "We have only a little money, all of us; I don't know how much Josie has; but it wouldn't all of it get but ever so little, I am afraid."

"I have two dollars," said Esther. "You may have one of 'em, uncle Eden."

"I don't want your dollars, my dear. I have enough of my own. You are not to give them to me."

Esther was silent and looked troubled. The tears began to work their way into her eyes.

“I have got a dollar and eighty cents,” said Maggie. “It wouldn’t get much, uncle Eden.”

“No, not much. I will tell you what some children did, that I have heard of. Their mother knew a person in want of nourishing food,—like this case, but not so extreme. She was not rich enough to do all she wanted to do. So she called the children together, and proposed to them to dine each one on vegetables and bread and such things one day in the week; and to send the meat and the fruit they would have eaten, to the sick poor man who could not get any.”

“And did they?” said Maggie.

“They agreed to do that. There were six children of them; and you see, that gave six good dinners to the sick man, every week.”

“And I suppose the mother gave the dinner for Sunday?” said Maggie.

“I think it was a mean plan!” said Fenton.

"It was health and life in the poor man's house," said Mr. Murray. "I only know that."

"But the children had as good a right to a good dinner as he had."

"They chose to give up their right. There was no compulsion."

"I wouldn't give up mine!" said Fenton. "We have money enough; we can give this creature what she wants, without starving ourselves."

"Why we *can't*, Fenton," said Esther. "We have not quite four dollars, Maggie and I; and you haven't a great deal; and all that would go very soon."

"Well, are you willing to give up your peaches for the rest of the fall?" asked Fenton, sitting upright; and your pears—just think of our Beurré pears!—and your *grapes*, Essie? are you willing to send this woman your great bunches of Chasselas and Hamburgh and Frontignac grapes? black and white? Just think. Because, if you would, I wouldn't."

Esther did think, and her face flushed and the tears started again.

"I'll send my bunches," said Maggie then; "if Esther will give me a *leetle* piece of hers; just half a dozen grapes."

Mrs. Ponsonby's eyes reddened then; and Esther looked at Maggie very earnestly.

"Is it only the fruit we have at *dinner*, uncle Eden?" she asked.

"It is just what you please, my dear; no more."

"O I would *like* to give her my dinner fruit," exclaimed Esther. "You know, Fenton, we often have it three times a day. This is only for one meal."

"We don't have grapes three times a day."

"I don't care. I would *like* to give her my fruit for three dinners in the week, uncle Eden; and then if Maggie gives hers for three dinners, that will make quite a little basket full. O I am very glad to do it. It's nice."

“And then, the days you give your grapes,” said Maggie, “I’ll give you some of mine ; and the days I give mine, you’ll let me have just two or three of yours.”

“Well, the fruit is arranged for,” said Mr. Murray ; “and it is a very important item. I’ll find out means for its getting to her.”

“The rest isn’t so easy,” said Esther.

“Why not ?”

“I don’t know, sir. How much ought we to do, uncle Eden ? — we children.”

“Just as much as you want to do, Essie. Not a bit more.” •

“I suppose you’ll do what we don’t do, uncle Eden ?” remarked Fenton.

“You are not at liberty to suppose any such thing. I cannot do everything ; and there are other poor people in the world besides this one.”

“I should think, if Maggie and Esther gave all her fruit, that would be doing their part,” said Josie.

“I do not know what their ‘part’ is,” said

Mr. Murray; "it depends on how they feel about it. What is yours, Josie?"

The little girl hesitated.

"I will help your imagination," said Mrs. Ponsonby, rousing herself from a reclining position on the rock, where she had been listening. "Let us suppose we can see into that poor little house. It is noon-day — one of these hot days; and the woman is lying there, coughing, and feverish, and weary, and faint. The heat beats down through the thin roof and makes the small house like an oven. Jeremiah is away on the hills. Her lips are dry and parched, and she would like something to cool and to moisten them; she is very thirsty; but the water that Julia brings when she asks for it, has been standing in the house ever since Jeremiah brought it last night; it is hot and undrinkable. The parched lips don't like it. If she had a cup of tea! But there has been no tea in the house for many a day to make a cup. She thinks of the mountain springs she used to

drink of once, and the cool running brooks where she used to wade with bare feet when she was a little girl. She feels as if she *must* get up, off that wretched bed, which of itself pollutes the air, and try if she cannot crawl to the door and get a breath of something fresher. She is so feeble she cannot stand. She had only corn meal mush to eat yesterday, and to-day her appetite refused it altogether ; she could not eat at all. If she had a bit, now, from some rich man's table ! a bit of nice, nourishing, comforting food ; a glass of the wine that well people are drinking without needing it ; a custard that some child is leaving half eaten ; it would put new life in her. She could get up then, perhaps, and go out to the doorstep, and Julia could make her bed. How she would like to have those sheets washed ! but there is not another pair, and if there were, she cannot get off the bed. And if she could, and if there were clean sheets, what use would it be without also a fresh night dress ? and she has but two : both

torn and both wanting to be washed ; but Julia declares she cannot wash them without soap, and soap is not to be come by."

" O don't, aunt Patty ! " cried Esther ; " I don't like to think of it."

" *She* has to feel it. The day wears on, and she lies still on her bed, more dead than alive, if it were not for coughing. She would be refreshed by having her hair brushed and got out of its tangle and put up neatly ; but there is no brush in the house, and only a half of a broken comb. She lies still and feebly fights the flies, which swarm black over everything. They would not, if the place were clean. How can it be clean ? Julia has not a broom to sweep the floor, nor a brush to scrub with, nor soap. Things must stay as they are. The poor woman would like, maybe, to have her own face and hands washed ; and she remembers that there are no towels, nothing but a corner of her sheet to serve for one, and it is as well not to wash. The day wears on ; and Jeremiah

comes home with some huckleberries. They are the best thing she has had all day, and she eats a few ; but her stomach, made delicate by the want of more substantial food, soon refuses this supply. Julia has made mush again, in the unwashed pot which held mush yesterday and the day before. With a little milk, or butter, it would not be impossible to make a sort of meal of this ; but alone it is impossible. So hunger and thirst and weariness compose themselves to watch or to sleep, as the case may be, through the dark hours. Dark all through ; for if she were dying, there is no means of kindling a light. And sunrise will find her a little feebler to-morrow than sunrise found her to-day."

The children looked aghast at each other.

" Oh, uncle Eden ! " cried Maggie, " *is it so bad ?* "

" It is worse, Maggie. "

" Won't you take her some things to-day ? "

" Yes. I will. "

“Will you take my dollar and eighty cents and buy her a broom and some soap? Or candles — or tea. I don’t know which she wants first. Will you, uncle Eden?”

“I will, if you say so.”

“But we must manage to have her *kept* comfortable,” said Esther; “after we are gone away. She mustn’t be this way any more. How shall we do, uncle Eden?”

“I’ll ask papa, and he’ll give me some money,” said Fenton. “That’s the easiest plan.”

“It is no plan at all, for *you*,” said his uncle. “What you give, you must give; and not your father or anybody else. I do not choose to have him called upon.”

The children were silent again; Esther’s face gathering shadow. Suddenly she spoke.

“I know what I can do. Uncle Eden, mamma promised to take me to Newport, but she didn’t want me to go, and would a great

deal rather have me stay at home with Miss Eldon. I'll get her to give me the money my going would cost."

Esther's face flushed and her eyes reddened ; nevertheless her voice was firm.

"Have you any idea how much that would be? "

"No sir. I dare say it would be twenty dollars, perhaps."

"It would be fifty or sixty."

"Oh, uncle Eden! "

"You could fit Mrs. Stetson up with house comforts."

"Oh, uncle Eden, could I? "

"Tea and sugar, and soap, and butter and milk, and broom and brush, and tea pot and cups and saucers ; even new sheets for her bed."

"O, will it do all that! " exclaimed Esther joyfully. Her face was quite cleared of shadow now.

"But *my* money was going to buy the

broom and candles and tea," said Maggie, in rather an injured tone of voice.

"It would not go further than the broom and candles, my darling," said her uncle.

"It shall buy those."

"And what will you do, uncle Eden?"

"I will send in some flour, and groceries, beside those that Esther's money will buy; and I will see that she is supplied with good butcher's meat, and with milk and eggs as she may want them."

"Why you are going to give her as much as anybody else has," said Fenton.

"Why not, if you please?"

"Well, — I thought it was right for poor people to be poor," said Fenton.

"What do you think about the right of sick people to be comfortable?"

"I don't see what right they have got," said Fenton doggedly, "unless they have the money to do it with. At that rate, sir, there would be no use in being rich."

“How is that? I do not follow you.”

“You would have to give it all away.”

“No,” said Mr. Murray quietly; — “only lend it, on good security.”

“Lend, sir? Those people would never pay you back again.”

“I don’t suppose they would.”

“Then it would be *giving* your money, uncle Eden. You would never see the colour of it again.”

“Ah but,” said Mr. Murray, “you forget something else. ‘He that giveth to the poor, *lendeth to the Lord*; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.’”

Fenton was silent; but Josie said,

“That will not be till the next world, will it, Mr. Murray?”

“There, and here too, my dear. I never knew money pay such interest as such money does.”

“There is the interest of the pleasure now,” said Esther. “Just think of that poor woman’s being made *comfortable*.”

“I’ve got a little money,” said Josie. “I guess I’ll give her some new nightgowns.”

“A little will do that,” said Mrs. Ponsonby. “We will get the muslin at Newburgh, and Betsey shall make them.”

Whereat Josie’s face grew as bright as the rest.

CHAPTER XII.

By this time the morning was fairly on its way, and the question was, What should be done with it?

“Benson has orders to be here early,” said Mr. Murray, “with a basket of supplies. If the tide serves, I think I will run round to Cornwall in the boat, and drive from there up to Newburgh, and get the various things we have determined upon getting.”

“For Mrs. Stetson?”

“Yes.”

“But then we can’t go to Birch Lake this morning?”

“No.”

“So we shall lose the whole day!” said Fenton.

“Not a necessary conclusion, is it?”

“We can’t do anything, sir!”

“I should feel that *I* was doing something,” said Mr. Murray. “For my part, I cannot enjoy my time, while I think how my poor neighbour is spending hers.”

“To be sure,” said Maggie; “that is what we came up to Eagle Hill for. But uncle Eden, I want to ask you a question.”

“You may.”

“Well, this is what I am thinking about. Does God always mean that we should do something particular in *every* place that we go to?”

“I think he does.”

“That is what I wanted to know,” said the little one contentedly.

“Why did you want to know it?”

“Then I would try to find out what it is, uncle Eden.”

“What *what* is?” said Fenton.

“Not very difficult, Maggie, if only you are quite willing to find out. When people are bent on their own pleasure and ease, they

often cannot see and cannot hear what our Father wants them to do. It is not always something to *do*; sometimes it is a lesson to learn. But always, whether it be doing or learning, if it is missed, there is no chance afterwards to make up for the loss. Every day and every place brings its own duty and its own chance for gain; and lost days and chances are lost for ever. I think my work and opportunity to day are to go to Newburgh."

At this moment Benson's head appeared coming up over the crest of the hill; and Fenton dashed off to meet him. He came back more slowly.

"He says the tide is flood," the boy announced dismally. "Mayn't I go with you, uncle Eden?"

"And leave your aunt and Miss Eldon and all the rest, without your protection and help?"

"What do they want protection for?"

"I can't say; I hope, for nothing; but it is

good to have a protector at hand, you know. Come, my boy; cannot you be more gallant than that?"

"But to give up a whole day!" said Fenton. "A whole day on Eagle Hill!"

"Do not give it up at all. Make it a good day. Now then, Benson, I am ready. Good bye, all of you!"

The children watched him off, and then turned to the practical question, "What shall we do?"

"Can't go a fishing," said Fenton; "nor do any other one thing!"

"Do a little of several things, then," suggested his aunt.

"I'm glad uncle Eden is gone," said Maggie. "It's nice. Now Mrs. Stetson will have her cups of tea and toast, and some lemonade. Let's go pick huckleberries, Fenton."

"We got enough yesterday," said Josie.

However, it was found on examination that the stock on hand was not large; and the

little company by degrees strayed off into the thicket with their baskets. A good many berries were picked; but I am obliged to say the bottoms of the baskets remained uncovered. Only a few blue huckleberries ran about over them in an uncomfortable sort of way; while black lips and dyed tongues shewed where the rest had gone. Indeed it was too hot to pick into the baskets, the children said. Straying about aimlessly, it was quite an agreeable diversion to meet with Mr. Saulmain in the midst of the bushes.

“Trying to get lost again?” said he good-humouredly.

“No, sir. O Mr. Saulmain, we *couldn't* lose ourselves now, for we can see uncle Eden's banner.”

“I see it too,” said Mr. Saulmain, lifting his eyes above the thicket to where the white streamer floated against the blue. “I declare! there's some air stirring up there. Well, I am the one lost to-day. Does any-

body know the direction in which Birch Hollow lies?"

"O Mr. Saulmain, are you going to fish?" cried Fenton.

"You see my tackle. Looks like it."

"I'll shew you the way!"

"You have been there?"

"Lots of times. You come this way, and I'll ask aunt Patty to let me go with you."

Fenton went off in a great hurry. The others following more gently, found Mrs. Ponsonby and Miss Eldon sitting with pens and paper in the shade of the pine trees, and Fenton pleading his cause.

"Mr. Saulmain will not want to be troubled with you."

"On the contrary," said that gentleman, "I shall be greatly obliged. I will bring him safe home by luncheon time."

"Then you will rest and take luncheon with us? You cannot have a rival engagement up here."

"I shall be most happy, if you will allow me such a privilege."

"You'll wait for us, aunt Patty, if we are a little late?" said Fenton, as he snatched his fishing tackle and they went off.

"Isn't he nice, aunt Patty?" said Esther.

"Who, my dear?"

"I mean, Mr. Saulmain."

"I really cannot say, Essie. It takes more than one look at a person to tell me whether he is nice."

"But he is *very* handsome, aunt Patty."

"Very."

"And kind, I am sure. And pleasant."

"Mamma says," put in Josie somewhat judiciously, "that one ought never to invite people one does not know."

"Unless one knows about them, I suppose. Now I happen to know about this gentleman, Josie."

"Oh!—" said Josie.

"But even if I did not, I think it is generally safe to return kindness with kindness—and even civility with civility."

Josie pondered. "Up here in the woods," she said, "I suppose it would be safe."

"Why aunt Patty knows about him; don't you hear her say so?" returned Esther. "Aunt Patty, I am very glad he is coming to luncheon. What have we got to give him?"

"Benson has brought us a supply of bread and cream, and we have blackberries plenty. I do not know what else, Essie."

"O aunt Patty, there are two cold chickens in the basket."

"But we must think of uncle Eden's dinner. What shall we give *him*, if we eat up the cold chicken?"

"Blackberries and bread and milk, — it does seem very little," said Esther.

"Mamma never asks anybody unless she can give them something handsome," remarked the competent little Miss McAllister.

"Kindness is always handsome," said Mrs. Ponsonby.

“O do you think so, aunt Patty?” said Esther, with rather a distressed look.

“And true hospitality is never proud.”

“Is that *pride*, aunt Patty?”

“It looks very much like it! Regarding your own distinction, rather than the needs or the comfort of your guest.”

“But isn’t it right, to like to have things comfortable and handsome, when you invite people?”

“If you are thinking of them—not of yourself. But few things are so comfortable as ease and kindness, Essie. And then, you forget something else. If when we say ‘Our Father,’ we mean it and feel it, then we must have a warm heart for other people who are his children too. Must we not? They are our brothers and sisters.”

“What, everybody?” said Josie.

“Are they not? If God is *their* Father and *our* Father?”

“Is Mr. Saulmain one of God’s *own* children?” Maggie asked wistfully.

"I cannot answer that, Maggie. I do not know. The family are Jews."

"Is *he* a Jew?" cried the children.

"I do not know; but probably."

"The Jews are not God's children," said Josie.

"Nobody is, in the close, inner sense, except those who are Christ's; forgiven, washed from sin, adopted, and brought home again. But in another sense, — 'Have we not all one Father? hath not one God created us?' "

"Aunt Patty," said Esther, "couldn't I make some chocolate?"

"I am afraid you do not know how, darling. We want uncle Eden for that. But I will tell you what you can do; you can make a cup of tea. Miss Eldon would like it this warm day, and I would."

"I'll make the fire right away," said Esther. "O I wonder if Fen has left us a pail of water?"

Fenton had not been so thoughtful.

Esther was not to be hindered of her purpose, however. With a good deal of pains she kindled the fire. And then she persuaded Josie to go with her to the spring and help bring the water home. Josie did not relish it; still, feeling a little identified with the family for the present, she was concerned about the honour of the entertainment; and it seemed to her that cups of tea would a little help out the meagreness of the meal. Mrs. Ponsonby smiled, and sighed, to see the two little girls come lugging the pail of water along, by turns, with infinite pains; spilling it on their dresses and on their feet; bending under the burden of it; flushed and hot with the exertion. But the kettle was put on, there is no doubt, over a good blaze; and sung for tea long before the tea could be made; and all the while the little girls kept up the fire.

“They are coming,” said Esther at last, “and I am very glad, for I am so hot!

And besides, the wood is 'most out. I hear their voices."

"My dear child, you have heated yourself unnecessarily, I think."

"But aren't you glad, aunt Patty, that we can give Mr. Saulmain a good cup of tea?"

"Maybe he don't care for it."

"Uncle Eden does. O there they are, aunt Patty! and Mr. Saulmain has got a whole string of fish. Perhaps he will cook some."

Hot and happy the two fishers looked; and in Mr. Saulmain's hand was, to be sure, a string of beautiful carp.

"Do you like tea, Mr. Saulmain?" inquired his special friend, Maggie.

"Tea? I am not devoted to it."

"Esther and Josie have boiled the kettle to make you some."

"They are very kind!" said the young man with a smile at his entertainers. "I am sure I shall enjoy the fruits of their

kindness. Fenton and I have had sharp work this morning. For my part, I am ready for anything."

"I thought I would make tea," said Esther, blushing yet pinker than her cheeks were before, "because we had so little else for luncheon, Mr. Saulmain; nothing but bread and butter and milk and blackberries."

"*Nothing* but that. What could be better. Shall I add some of our fish to the bill of fare?"

"O that would be nice!" said Esther. "Fenton will clean them."

"I won't trouble him." Mr. Saulmain was quite equal to the occasion. The fish were ready in five minutes. In another five minutes they were cooking. The young man sat by the coals to look after the work the coals were doing, and all the children gathered round him.

"Did you put salt on them, Mr. Saulmain?" Maggie ventured to ask.

“No.”

“Uncle Eden does.”

“Perhaps he is right. But an old fisherman once charged me *not* to put salt on my fish till they were cooked; and not then either, till they were going into my mouth. The salt melts and is only salt water upon the fish; it should be taken in sharp crystals, the old fellow said. And I rather think there is something in it. I should give a squeeze of a lemon too, if I had it; but I did not come prepared to do anything but catch my fish. I did not know what your kindness would let me enjoy.”

“O we’ve got a lemon,” said Esther, “and you may have it, Mr. Saulmain.”

Whether because of this novel addition, or because of their new cooking assistant, the children thought these were the best fish they had had yet. Luncheon went off capitally, cups of tea and all. Mr. Saulmain proved himself as good at talking as at angling. The children were charmed.

“Where do you live, Mr. Saulmain?”
Maggie inquired.

“When I am at home? About fifty miles off.”

“Is it a pretty place?”

“I hope you will think so, some of these days.”

“O, I shall never see it.”

“I hope you will. I have some brothers and sisters, who I think would be delighted to welcome you and shew you their haunts and pleasures.”

“But we do not know them.”

“Not yet.”

“We *can't*, for they are fifty miles off.”

“Well, not all of them. Rasselas is down here at Blake's hotel; perhaps Mrs. Ponsonby will permit me to bring him to see you.”

Mrs. Ponsonby expressed her willingness.

“Is Rasselas your brother?” said Maggie.

“He is my brother.”

"I never heard of a boy with such a name."

"That's the advantage of it," said Mr. Saulmain laughing.

"How big is he?"

"A little older than this brother of yours, I judge. And my brother Zachary is about his age."

"Have they got a donkey?"

"A donkey! I believe not. Zachary has a Shetlander."

"A pony!" exclaimed Fenton. "That's what I want; a pony."

"Is his pony down here at Black's?"

"No; the pony is at home. It belongs to Zachary, and Zachary is not here."

"Doesn't Rasselas ride it?"

"No. Rasselas has his own pony, of a different description."

"What description?" inquired Fenton eagerly.

"I believe it is an Indian pony. It's name is Powhatan."

“There!” said Fenton; “that’s what I want; a pony to ride myself, and nobody else. Donkeys ain’t much count!”

“You thought Jack was very good, till now,” said Esther. “*I think he is.*”

“I have done harm, I am afraid,” said Mr. Saulmain laughing. “How natural the desire for acquisition is to the human mind!”

“And how selfish,” added Mrs. Ponsonby.

“No, I hope not. Is it?” said Mr. Saulmain. “Not necessarily, I hope. If it were not for the desire of acquisition, how would the world get on? It would be in a very stand-still condition, I am afraid.”

“I don’t know,” said Mrs. Ponsonby. “You remember what one of your own prophets has said? ‘Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!’”

“That is rather grasping,” said the young man. “Yet, all the stir and progress of the

world come from this restless desire for bettering himself, which every man possesses."

"And something besides stir and progress. So, 'they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away: so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage.'"

"Certainly, that is the abuse of things," said the young man. "Everything may be abused, of course. But what would you do, Mrs. Ponsonby? would you stifle this universal desire — instinct, I may call it?"

"Not exactly. But every man seeks *his own* — that is what I complain of. And every child. Witness Fenton here."

Mr. Saulmain laughed again, looked at Fenton, looked doubtful, and finally declared he must think about it and renew the subject another time; for the afternoon was waning and he had a long scramble to take down the mountain. So he made courteous adieus, and went away, carrying the hearts of the children with him.

The afternoon grew very lovely. Some slight veil of haze or cloud, they could not tell which, seemed to be drawn between them and the sun; enough to soften the heat and make the light less fierce and temper the very air to enjoyment. The children used their advantage and had a great time of play; finding impossible fairy castles in rocks and moss, and stretches of park in the huckleberry district, and taking grasshoppers for deer. So the hours passed, until it grew late. All the preparation for supper that could be made before Mr. Murray's arrival, the children made; and sat down on the rocks around the fire to wait for him; glad at last to be still.

"After all," said Esther, "real work, like this, is pleasanter than make-believe play."

"It hasn't been make-believe play at all," said Maggie.

"Well, I mean, play about make-believe things. It's more fun to kindle the fire and prepare supper. I wonder if it really is,

always? Poor people would have a better time than rich people, if it were."

"If they were not so *very* poor," added Maggie. "I shouldn't think living on mush was pleasant."

"No, indeed. Fancy it! Nothing but mush morning and noon and night. How can they?"

"I shouldn't like being poor at all," said Josie. "I want to have always the very best of everything; and to be dressed beautifully morning and noon and night."

"But I don't think when we are dressed beautifully we have the best time," said Esther. "Do you, Josie? It's more fun to have on a common dress and do what we have been doing this afternoon, than to be in something so delicate you mustn't stir, or so rich that you must be all the while taking care. I hate taking care! I think it's a great deal more fun to cook fish, as we do up here, then to go to parties; a great deal more fun!"

“O so do I,” cried Maggie.

“But I shouldn’t like to do it all the while,” said Josie doubtfully.

“We never were in such a beautiful house as this,” observed Maggie contentedly. “There is uncle Eden!”

The sweet bustle of preparation began again. Uncle Eden was never tired; but the children were quite sure he must stand in need of refreshment. He had brought a little basket of fresh eggs with him; and boiling these by the second hand of Fenton’s watch was a delightful variety in the cooking department. The sun was almost upon the horizon when the eggs were done.

At supper Mr. Murray gave an account of his day’s work. He had gone up successfully to Cornwall, and then to Newburgh; from Newburgh he had taken a wagon down over the hills to Canterbury, and there got still another and a ruder vehicle to bring on the stores he had brought for Mrs. Stetson. Enough had been brought

to place her in comfort. Mr. Murray had made her a glass of lemonade before he left her; and the kettle was on for tea. Flour and other needed things he had supplied in quantity sufficient to last some time. And Jeremiah, Mr. Murray said, was standing about in a state of great wonderment.

“I do not know what to do with Jeremiah,” he said in conclusion.

“Why, uncle Eden?”

“His mother will not last a great while, my dear; and then the child will be alone. Julia, his half sister, is a poor kind of creature; not fit to take care of him.”

“Does he want anybody to take care of him?” Fenton asked.

“He is younger than you.”

“Yes, sir. I could take care of myself.”

“Could you make your way in the world, if you had not a friend in it, do you think? Would you not be a little puzzled even how to get your bread?”

"No, sir; I don't think I should."

"How would you set about it? Come, tell! 'Make believe,' as Maggie says, that you are in Jerry's place; his mother dead, and his sister good for nothing. What will you do first?"

"Plenty of things," said Fenton.

"Begin, and let us hear how you will get on. We will make up a story between us, you and I; and maybe I shall get some light."

But Fenton was not so ready to begin.

"I suppose I should pick blackberries at first," he said at length.

"Ah, the blackberries are all gone then. It is later in the season than where we are; the blackberry vines and the huckleberry bushes are brown and sear. No fruit there."

"I suppose, then, I should go to some farmer and get work to do on the farm."

"What could you do?"

"I could weed, I suppose."

"Past the season. Nobody troubles himself much about weeds on a farm when it gets so late."

"Well—I could pick up potatoes."

"You could. But the first man you apply to hasn't begun to harvest his potatoes yet. The second has all the help he wants. The third has no potatoes to dig. And at the fourth place the farmer's wife won't be bothered with a boy. By this time the day is about done. You have had no dinner, and you can get no supper, and you have been walking all day."

The girls began to stir with an emotion of great interest in this new play. Fenton fidgeted with a different expression.

"That isn't the way it would be, sir."

"It is the way it *has* been, hundreds of thousands of times. In all likelihood it is the way it would be with you. What would you do?"

"Go hungry, I suppose."

"How long?"

“Till next morning. I guess I could stand that.”

“Where would you sleep?”

Fenton had got into a very curious state of discomposure. He flushed and was uneasy, and looked almost ready to give way to tears, only that Fenton never did such a thing.

“Where would you sleep?”

“I could go back home.”

“To the old house? Suppose Julia has taken away the furniture and locked up the hut.”

“I could get on a hay mow in a barn. A hay mow is a good place; as good as hemlock branches.”

“Go on; sleep in a barn; what would you do next morning? There are no other farmers within some miles. What step next?”

“I don’t know, sir. I *should* know, if I was really looking for work. There would be something. There always is.”

“Try and imagine it. I want you to carry on this supposititious case a little further. Would you ask the farmer’s wife for some breakfast?”

“No, I don’t think I should.”

“Well; go on.”

“I would go to Canterbury, or to Newburgh.”

“What then?”

“Why I could find some work *there*.”

“What work?”

“I can’t tell, sir. I would find something.”

“To whom would you apply? Come; suppose you are Jeremiah, and not Fenton Candlish.”

Fenton thought awhile.

“I might get something to do at the inn.”

“What would you propose to do?”

“Anything. I could be stable boy; or I could clean knives and cut wood.”

“Hardly the first, if you were Jeremiah. Such a mite of a creature has hardly inches

enough to reach up to a horse's halter, and scarce experience enough to be trusted with it. You wouldn't get work in the stables. And in the house, do you fancy the good woman would take a waiter without a character?"

"Whatever I say, you will say I could not do it," said Fenton snappishly.

"My dear boy, I am only putting a case. I want you to fancy the situation of a morsel of humanity, like little Jerry, cast alone upon the world. I am not making difficulties. Do you not see that the difficulties exist?"

"I do," cried Esther.

"Then what *would* he do, uncle Eden?" said Maggie. "What would become of him?"

"He might be taken to the poor-house."

"What would he do there?"

"Nothing; but learn idleness and wickedness from other children; get habits of vice and squalor; and grow hard, for want of somebody to love him."

“ And *would* he go to the poor-house ? ”

“ I do not know. If not, he might fall in with vicious companions who would teach him their trade of loafing and thieving ; and so little Jerry might come to earn a lodgment in a jail.”

“ O, uncle Eden, you don’t think *that* will become of him ? ”

“ It is the fate of many and many, my darling. Just because no one on earth cares for them. No, I do not mean it shall happen to Jeremiah, if I can help it.”

“ What will you do with him, sir ? ” said Fenton.

“ What ought I to do with him ? ”

“ I do not see that there is any ‘ ought ’ about it. You are not *obliged* to do anything for him.”

“ Am I not ? You know that I am a sworn servant of God, Fenton.”

“ Yes, sir,” said the boy deferentially.

“ In the book of the prophet Isaiah, describing the sort of fasting that the Lord

likes, he says, — ‘Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, *and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house?*’ ”

“Are you going to do *that* with him?” inquired Esther after an astonished pause.

“What do you think?”

“But, uncle Eden,” said Fenton, “do you mean that we ought to take home all the poor children that have nobody to take care of them? to our *homes?*”

“What do you think, Fenton?”

“I never heard of such a thing, sir.”

“What do you suppose the Lord means?”

There was silence.

“It is astonishing,” said Mr. Murray, “how astonished people are if you only propose to them to obey the Lord’s commands.”

“But *are* they his commands, sir?”

“You heard for yourself. If it were a law of the State, or contained in the terms of a will, no one would question the meaning of the words. You forget, Fenton, that the Lord loves these poor little waifs that no

one else loves. He is their Father; 'A father of the fatherless, and a judge of the widow;' their Father, and our Father. It does not please him that his children should be strangers to one another. I *must* take care of Jeremiah, for he is my Father's child, and my Father has trusted me with the care of him."

"That is what we came up on Eagle hill for, isn't it, uncle Eden?" said Maggie.

"I think so."

"And Jeremiah is our little brother."

"Yes, Maggie."

Fenton flung away in great disgust and displeasure. Josie whispered Esther that her uncle was a man of very strange opinions. Esther did not know what to say.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE moonlight was so veiled, either by haze or clouds, that Mr. Murray lit the bon-fire for the children to go to bed by its light. This was matter of rejoicing always; the red glow was cheery, and the flickering light, fading and leaping up, gave curious views of things; interesting as well.

The blaze had long died out; all eyes had been for some hours closed in quiet slumber; when another sort of light wakened Mrs. Ponsonby. She sat up and listened. A low, faint, distant muttering came to her ears. And presently another flash of light, very brilliant, shewed her the children lying in their sound sleep. Then came again the low rumble of the thunder, but nearer and more resonant this time. No head had been

lifted but her own, and she sat waiting, when she heard Mr. Murray's voice on the outside of the tent.

"Patty" —

"Yes, brother."

"I am afraid we are going to have a shower. Can you arrange to let Fenton and me come under shelter?"

"Very gladly. Will this canvas keep the rain off?"

"O yes."

Softly Mrs. Ponsonby awoke the sleepers and explained the necessity of their being up and ready for company. The little girls hurried to their feet and shook their flannel suits into shape. Mrs. Ponsonby struck a match and lighted the lantern which Mr. Murray had been careful to hang up inside the tent, for use in emergencies. By the light of it the ladies arose and put themselves and the tent in a little order. They were quite a gipsy-looking party; Josie in red, the little Candlishes in dark blue, the

ladies with gay-coloured shawls round them. But Maggie's face was uneasy.

"Is it going to storm?" she asked. "Are we going to have a thunderstorm? I thought it wouldn't storm while we were up on Eagle hill?"

"We had no assurance of that, Maggie."

"But oh, what shall we do? we shall get all wet."

"No; uncle Eden says the tent will keep us all dry, if we will let him and Fenton come in; and I think we are ready now."

A very bright flash of lightning illuminated the tent, lantern and all, as she spoke.

"Where are they?" cried Maggie. "Uncle Eden!"—and the little voice sounded in trepidation.

"Here!" came from without the tent.

"We are all ready. Come in! Do come in!"

Fenton pushed in first, just as the thunder that followed that flash was rolling among the hills.

“Ain’t it jolly!” was his exclamation.
“Can we all sit down here!”

“Jolly!” repeated Esther; “a boy calls everything jolly. I don’t think it’s very jolly, for my part, to be waked up out of your sleep, and have to sit up and keep your eyes open whether you can or not.”

“You need not, my dear Essie,” said Miss Eldon. “You may curl down here again and put your head on my lap, and sleep as fast as you please.”

“Uncle Eden,” said Maggie anxiously, as Mr. Murray pushed open the curtains and followed Fenton, “is it going to be a bad storm?”

“I do not know, Maggie,” said the voice that always sounded calm and generally cheery. It comforted Maggie a little bit, by sheer force of sympathy.

“Well you do look jolly,” said Fenton.
“One, two, three, four, five, six, seven! Seven heads inside this little tent. It’s good there are not eight of us.”

The burst of light and sound that came at the instant, stopped any reply. Maggie crept to her uncle's side and cuddled to his breast, with his arm round her. Esther, who had laid her head down, started up again. Josie exclaimed. And then they all listened to the long roll of the thunder, pealing among the hills, thrown back from one to another, and seeming as if it would never stop rolling and echoing.

"Was that all one clap?" said Esther.

"Multiplied by forty," said Fenton.

"No, but was it? There it comes again!"

And Essie covered and covered her eyes, for a new flash came, accompanied by a peal that shook the earth. The rain drops, heavy and scattering, began to strike the canvas roof over their heads; then in another minute united in one rush and downpour of drops, furious and heavy. The flashes of light and the echoing peals of thunder now became almost incessant; and with every fresh burst Mr. Murray felt a convulsive start of the little one in his arms.

“Maggie,” he said in the calm voice which had great power with the children always, — there was such an accent of happy quiet in it, — ‘Maggie, are you afraid?’”

“Yes, uncle Eden,” — came in very smothered tones from the hidden lips. Maggie’s face was buried in Mr. Murray’s breast.

“What are you afraid of?”

“The thunder” — was answered tremulously.

“Thunder never hurt anybody yet, that ever I heard of.”

“It’s the lightning,” said Fenton. “Noise don’t hurt. It’s the lightning that kills people — don’t you know that?”

“Hush, Fenton. The lightnings are in our Father’s hand, Maggie; they ‘go and say to him, Here we are;’ they obey his commands. We are just as safe here as at home; and just as safe in a thunderstorm as at any other time.”

“Then there is no such thing as danger?” said Fenton.

"Danger is a matter of circumstance ; safety is a reality."

Which answer sufficed to shut Fenton's mouth for a few minutes.

"Safety from what?" he asked at length.

"None but the Lord's people have a minute's safety from anything."

"Why, sir?"

"They are exposed to all manner of evil ; and have no protection."

"What have the Lord's people, then?"

"God is their shield."

The words, or something in the tone of the speaker, again silenced Fenton, and also quieted the nervous trembling of the little one in Mr. Murray's arms. But the conclusion was too unrelishable for Fenton to submit to it. He began again.

"What's Maggie afraid of, then?"

"She has not learned yet what a shield the Lord is, to those that trust in him."

"He don't save them from things, though."

"What do you mean by 'things'?"

“Lightning, — and sickness, and lots of things.”

“Yes, he does; thousands and thousands of times he saves them. And when, once in thousands of times, he lets something touch them, it is always for a blessing to come out of it. No harm can happen to them whose shield the Lord is. Our Father’s mighty arm is round his children, and his love counts every hair of their heads.”

“But uncle Eden,” said Maggie’s smothered voice, “the lightning is so bright!”

“I know it, Maggie; I enjoy it very much.”

“Do you!”

“As it lights up all the world, I say to myself, ‘So shall the coming of the Son of man be.’ Only, *that* brightness will not vanish away. ‘Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself.’”

“And you are never afraid?”

“No.”

“Of *nothing*?” said Maggie with intense intonation.

“How can I be, pet? Don’t you know it is written, ‘He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty’? What should hurt me, under that shadow?”

“Of course, if you keep so close to him, he will take care of you,” said Maggie, with her eyes still hid. But at this moment there came a great crash of the thunder and with it a more tremendous downpour of the rain than had come yet. It beat hard on their canvas roof; and among the hills the thunder echoed and shook them as if a dozen peals had burst instead of one.

“O, uncle Eden, we’ll all get wet!” cried Esther.

“I do not feel a drop.”

“But the rain *must* come in, if it pours down like this.”

“It must come in, unless the canvas keeps it out.”

“Do you think it will?”

“I entertain very little doubt on that subject. Maggie, can’t you lift your head up?”

“I don’t like to, uncle Eden.”

“Don’t you know how a mother hen covers up her chickens under her wings when they are cold, or sleepy, or when there is a hawk in the sky?”

“I know.”

“Our Father takes quite as good care of every little child that trusts in him. ‘He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust.’”

“Does he say that?”

“Certainly.”

“Doesn’t he like me to keep my eyes covered up?”

“I don’t think he likes you to be afraid.”

“Uncle Eden, I’m not much afraid when you hold me.”

“The Lord would like to have you trust in *him* just so; only much more.”

“Does he *care*, uncle Eden?”

“Do you think your father down at Mosswood would be pleased to have you feel uncertain of his love or his protection? when his arm was round you?”

“He wouldn’t like it at all,” said Esther.

“Neither does your father in heaven like it, Maggie.”

The storm became so violent now, for a little time, that talking was stopped. The rain fell in floods; the flashes of lightning were so incessant, they almost blent into one; the thunder never ceased. For the long chains of hills on both sides the river took it up and threw it back and forth and rolled it into the distance for miles; and before one report had died out another had begun echoing. It was magnificent; but the little party in the tent scarcely enjoyed it, with the exception of one or two of the older ones. At last, with the children, drowsiness counterbalanced the storm. Fenton dropped on the ground and curled himself down to sleep;

Esther and Josie nodded, and then their heads found some resting place, of an arm or a lap, and they forgot all that was going on; and as the thunder came no longer in near reports, but sounded more and more in the distance or rolled in high and wild echoings further up in the sky, even Maggie ceased to tremble, and soft breathings upon Mr. Murray's breast told that all was well there. Less and less frequent, fainter and further, came and went the lightnings and the thunderings; the rain fell now only in scattered drops; the three people in the little tent who still kept awake, looked at each other by the light of the lantern above. Then Mrs. Ponsonby opened the curtains a bit and peeped out.

"The clouds are broken," she said. "And there is a curious light through the breaks in them. The moon, I suppose."

"The dawn," said Mr. Murray.

"Is it possible? I am glad; but I would not have missed this night for anything. I

suppose everything is drenched with water, brother?"

"Probably."

"How shall we do?"

"It will be all dry on the top of this rock in a very little while. The children have thick shoes."

"Can you kindle a fire?"

"With a little more trouble than usual."

"Do you suppose we have anything left to eat, that is not washed away?"

"I am not certain of the state of the larder," said Mr. Murray; "but I live in hopes."

Mrs. Ponsonby smiled. She had known it often before, yet the fresh evidence was pleasant, that nothing could shake Mr. Eden out of a certain imperturbable calm, in which he seemed always to dwell. His brow might look thoughtful; it rarely was ruffled. She could see it now, in the faint lantern light, as smooth as it constantly was. "Storms do not touch him," Mrs. Ponsonby thought, with half a smile and half a sigh.

The dawn, you know, when it once begins, is quick about coming on. Again and again Mrs. Ponsonby's fingers parted the tent curtains to get a peep at the outer world ; and at last she could not take her eyes away, and the curtains remained permanently open. A soft grey light stealing up into the sky ; an inexpressible aromatic perfume of air ; a little stir of a breeze occasionally which shook down pattering rain drops ; the sleepy trill of a bird here and there, just beginning to wake itself up ; the mountain outline growing defined and dark upon the brightening sky. Then a few birds in earnest giving out of their little throats the announcement that it was day, and others more and more joining in the concert, till all the mountain top was alive with songs ; glad, gleeful, busy, liquid music. " Ah, they are glad of the rain ! " said Mrs. Ponsonby. The sparrows were first of the orchestra ; successive parties of warblers, thrushes, jays, and other numberless performers, following

in course. Meanwhile the sky cleared itself from the dusk of night ; a clear lemon colour filled the eastern quarter, and by and by lights of gold and amber broke upon the cloud racks that were sailing overhead. Mr. Murray put out the lantern light. And then soon the touches and lines of gilding on the tops of the hills told that the sun was up. The disc of the sun was hidden yet behind the hilly shore of the other side of the river.

Mr. Murray left the tent now to the ladies and children, and went to try what he could do in the way of kindling a fire. His sister feared a little for his success ; nevertheless, when she came out, some three quarters of an hour later, she found a good fire roaring on the rocky hearth.

“ Wasn’t everything drenched ? ” she asked.

“ Dripping.”

“ How *did* you manage, Eden ? ”

“ There’s always a way,” said Mr. Murray, “ if you know it.”

“ What is there to eat ? ”

“All that we left last night, I fancy. The waterproof cloth spread over kept everything sound in that spot. I will put the fish down as soon as there are coals enough; but it was a long job to make the fire burn in the first place. It is only just going.”

Mrs. Ponsonby stood by the fire and fed it, while Mr. Murray prepared his fish. The sun got up above the hilly eastern horizon in the mean time, and flooded the hill top with light and warmth. The leaves of the trees were glittering with rain drops, but the moisture had already drained or dried away in great part from the rock. The fragrant freshness of the air it is impossible to tell.

“Eden, it is worth a night of storms, to taste such a morning!”

“Even so, will it be?” said Mr. Murray quietly.

His sister did not answer him, and the tears started into her eyes. She stood very still, looking away into the north; then at her brother who was putting his gridiron on the coals.

"Will what be, uncle Eden?" said a small voice.

"O, you overheard me, did you?" said Mr. Murray. "Have you got up for all day?"

"Yes, sir. It is very late for our breakfast, isn't it? Uncle Eden, the moss is all wet!"

"You must not sit upon the moss. I will arrange things for you presently."

"You always do," said Maggie with admiration. "What were you saying will be, uncle Eden?"

"I'll tell you when we come to breakfast. That's the time for talk, you know; now is the time for action. There, Maggie, don't let my fish burn, now."

Maggie stood watching the gridiron, with an immense accession of importance. Mr. Murray went to the tent, from which the whole party had now emerged; and brought from it the thick coverlets and blankets which formed the covering of the hemlock

bed. These he spread about on the dry rock, and waterproof cloth over the rock where it was mossy, so that everybody could be seated as comfortably as ever. And no morning yet on the top of the hill had equalled this in brilliant beauty and deliciousness. To crown the whole, Mr. Murray proposed to make some coffee. The proposal was hailed. And presently, amid all the natural odours of the morning, floated a fragrance that owned the far-off region of spices to be its birthplace.

“Uncle Eden,” said Maggie reflectively, “it does smell very good!”

“It does, Maggie.”

“Don’t you think I might have *just a little*?”

“As we are not at home, nor living according to rules?”

“Yes, sir,” said Esther eagerly. “Don’t you think it would be right, uncle Eden?”

“I think it would be highly proper, and useful.”

The children clapped their hands ; and from that minute not the bird denizens of the hill top were more hilarious than they. The fish was served, and the cups of coffee went round, and Mrs. Ponsonby's arm grew fairly tired with cutting bread.

"Why it's the best breakfast we've had yet," cried Maggie ; "and I thought there wouldn't be hardly anything left to eat."

"I thought so too," said Fenton.

"But now is talking time," Maggie went on ; "and you haven't told me what you were going to tell me, uncle Eden. You said 'so' something would be ; what?"

"Your aunt Patty had remarked to me that it was worth going through storms, to taste the beauty of the morning."

"Yes, I think so too," said Esther. "But the storm wasn't much."

"You slept through it. However, children, there are storms in this world — in people's lives — that they cannot sleep through ; storms that are very dark, and that

last a long time. And I questioned, after your aunt Patty's remark, whether what she said might be even true of those storms too."

"What did she say?"

"That it was worth going through the storm to taste the morning that has come after."

"But uncle Eden —" said Maggie very wistfully.

"What?"

"The morning? What morning comes after *those* storms?"

"Morning is the beginning of the day."

"Yes —"

"When will the day begin, that shall know no night?"

The children were all silent, looking at him and at each other.

"I think it will begin when 'the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in

Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.' I think that will be the beginning of our day, Maggie; the 'morning' that will never grow old. 'There shall be no night' any more; 'no more curse; no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.' 'Thy sun shall no more go down; neither shall thy moon withdraw itself: for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended.' "

"And then, too, the promise shall be fulfilled which says, 'Behold I make all things new,' " Mrs. Ponsonby added. "Don't you see how new everything looks this morning?"

"Will it be a great while first?" inquired Maggie thoughtfully.

"Nobody knows just how long. It may come very soon."

"Shall we all be there?"

"All the Lord's children."

"Nobody else?"

"There is no 'morning' for anybody else. 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection.'"

"But we were talking of storms," said Maggie after another wistful pause. "Will that morning be any better for going through storms?"

"What do you think of *this* morning, in that connection?"

Maggie's eyes looked very thoughtfully at the bright, dew-dropped world before her. The problem was difficult. Esther spoke up.

"I do not think we could have enjoyed it so much, uncle Eden, without the thunder-storm last night, and the wet, and the disturbance, and all."

"I don't think we could," added Josie.

"I am sure we could not," said Mrs. Ponsonby.

"Will it be so?" asked Maggie, turning

her eyes from the green wilderness to her uncle's face.

"I think it will."

"And is that why storms come — that we may enjoy the morning?"

"No, Maggie; not the principal reason. Storms come to teach us a lesson; or to make us practise an old lesson; that we may be ready for the morning when it comes. And when the storms have made us trust in our Father and taught us to obey him, and driven us to hide ourselves under his shadow, then the morning when it comes finds us very glad."

"People must die first," — said Maggie with a brow of intense meditation.

"Before that morning? Many have died; more will; but some will be alive then that love Jesus."

"Why do people die, uncle Eden?"

"Why, because they must," said Fenton. "People get sick, and then they die, of course."

“ *Why* do they ? ” Maggie repeated.

“ Maggie, I have my reasons for putting off the discussion of this question till we have our luncheon, or dinner. Will that do ? I think I must see about work presently.”

“ O uncle Eden, won’t you have another cup of coffee first ? ” said Esther. “ Here is some, hot and good.”

Mr. Murray took the cup of coffee, and while he was sipping it, Fenton eagerly inquired what was the business on hand.

“ I must see Mrs. Stetson. I must prepare fresh hemlock boughs for the tent, and take up the old ones, and let the sun dry the rock there thoroughly. I rather think I must catch some fish too.”

“ O let us all go ! ” exclaimed Esther. “ It’s so lovely and fresh and beautiful this morning.”

“ But how long are you going to stay on the mountain ? ” asked Mrs. Ponsonby.

“ I am not tired of it. Are you ? The weather has not changed yet. I thought,

last night, it would ; but it has not. It will be very hot to-day. And Miss Eldon has only just come."

"Unanswerable," said Mrs. Ponsonby. "I wish it were possible to live in the woods always, for my part."

With a shout and a dance the children celebrated the conclusion thus arrived at ; and then business did indeed in earnest begin. For a while all hands were as active as possible ; indeed the morning was far advanced when they were able to set out for Birch Lake ; and the day turned out hotter than any one they had felt yet in those high regions. Fenton fished, while his uncle went on to Mrs. Stetson's cottage ; then when Mr. Murray came back, a few casts of his line brought in fish enough for the day's wants ; and the party walked home in the growing cool of the afternoon. No words can tell how pleasant it was ; with every leaf washed, and every bird feeling gay, and with mosses and lichens refreshed a little with the rain. At

home there was sharp work again, until the tent was new spread with hemlock twigs and the dried coverings laid upon them, and the canvas curtains pegged down fast. Benson had come opportunely with a basket, and he gave good help. Then fish were to be cleaned and cooked, and the dinner served. On the whole, it was a rather tired party that sat down at last to do honour to it.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE sun was low down in the sky when all these preparations were accomplished and the little company sat down to their evening meal. There were warm lights on the hills; there was a gleam on the river; there were flushings of crimson and amber on the sailing masses of vapour overhead; there was a white glory in the north; and in the west a golden flood of brilliance. Leaves and twigs, edges of rock and tufts of bracken, caught the reflection of these lights, and glowed back a thousand responses. The sun's "departing kiss" was on even the cheeks of the children, and on Mrs. Ponsonby's brow.

Mr. Murray carved for the party, and then

threw down his knife and fork. "How can a man eat!" he cried.

"If you were as hungry as I am, you would know," said Fenton.

"It's a beautiful dining-room, isn't it, uncle Eden?" said Maggie.

"I do not know how we shall bear living in houses again," said Mrs. Ponsonby.

"But we shall not go home soon; shall we?" asked Esther and Josie.

"Ay; we have lost something by the fall," said Mr. Murray answering his sister. "But we shall get it all back again! Look over yonder, and think, — 'Thy sun shall no more go down.' — 'There shall be no night there.' — 'The days of thy mourning shall be ended. —'"

"Now you are stopping aunt Patty's eating, uncle Eden," Maggie remonstrated; "and she *must* be hungry."

"She is feeding on something else, Maggie."

"What do you mean, uncle Eden?" Fenton inquired, between mouthfuls.

“I am afraid you could not understand me, my boy, if I were to tell you. Eat your own meat, and be satisfied.”

“Will all this beautiful world be changed, uncle Eden?” Esther wistfully asked. “You said it would be all new.”

“It will be as much better than this, Essie, as the bright, fresh creation we looked at this morning was better than our night of clouds and storms.”

“I cannot imagine how that can be,” said the little girl, looking off at the lights.

“Must take it on trust, my child.”

“Uncle Eden,” said Maggie, “that will be when those four living-beings have stopped saying ‘Come’?”

“Because creation’s groans and cries will have been answered. Yes, Maggie!

“‘No more fatigue, no more distress,
Nor sin nor fear shall reach the place!
No groans shall mingle with the songs
Which issue from immortal tongues.’”

“Go on, Eden!” said his sister.

“ You might as well go on, yourself,” said Mr. Murray; “ you know as much as I do.

“ ‘ Here were sweet and varied tones,
Bird, and breeze, and fountain’s fall,
Yet creation’s travail groans
Ever sadly sighed through all.
There no discord jars the air —
Harmony is perfect there.

“ ‘ Jesus reigns, the Life, the Sun
Of that wondrous world above ;
All the clouds and storms are gone,
All is bright, and all is love.
All the shadows melt away
In the blaze of perfect day ! ’ ”

“ Don’t you ’most wish it would come, uncle Eden ? ” said Maggie.

“ Not almost, but quite, Daisy.”

“ But we’ve got to die first,” said the little one.

“ Well ” — said Mr. Murray.

“ ‘ Let love weep, —
It cometh, that day of the Lord, divine ;
And the morning star will surely shine
On the long death-night of sleep.’ ”

“Will they be *asleep* when they are dead?” asked Maggie.

“Only their bodies, my child. And their bodies not always.

“‘Let hope despair, —

Let death and the grave shout victory, —

That flush of the morning yet shall be,

Which shall wake the slumberers there!’”

“After all, the Bible words are the best. ‘We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.’”

“And then, what shall we be like?” said Maggie.

“Like Him; that is all we know.”

“And don’t we know what He is like?”

“Only in a little, Maggie; just a little hint or two. Do you remember, that time when he was on earth and was transfigured in the sight of three of his disciples, ‘his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light’? We shall be strong,

and beautiful, and glorious, — as we are not now.”

“ I think some people are beautiful now ” — said Maggie, after a wistful contemplation of her uncle’s face. It was impossible to misunderstand her, and impossible not to laugh. Only Mr. Murray demurely assured her that the faces she thought beautiful now, would be a great deal more beautiful then.

“ But we have all got to die first,” said the little one again.

“ Well, Maggie ? ” said her uncle. “ For my part, I would just as lief die as not.”

“ Would you, uncle Eden ! ” said Esther in great wonderment.

“ Why not ? ” — and then Mr. Murray quoted from a hymn again.

“ ‘ Not always on the journey, O my God !

Not always on the journey, when the home,

The place thou hast prepared for my abode,

Stands open to receive me when I come.

Why should I wish to linger in the wild,

When thou art waiting, Father, to receive thy child ? ’ ”

“But I thought people didn’t want to die, generally,” said Josie.

“I shouldn’t, if all I had was in this world,” Mr. Murray answered. “But you see, Josie, my home is up yonder. It is quite different.

“‘They stand, those halls of Zion,
Conjubilant with song,
And bright with many an angel,
And many a martyr throng :
The Prince is ever in them,
The light is aye serene,
The pastures of the blessed
Are decked in glorious sheen.
There is the throne of David,
And there, from toil released,
The shout of them that triumph,
The song of them that feast :
And they, beneath their Leader
Who conquered in the fight,
For ever and for ever
Are clad in robes of white.’ ” —

“What will they do there ? ” Maggie next asked. “Just be glad ? ”

“I don’t think I should be quite glad for long, Maggie, if I hadn’t something to be busy about.”

"I do not think you would," said his sister. "But you have something now to do, Eden, which you are neglecting. Your dinner is grown cold. Let me get you a fresh cup of tea."

With a glance of affection between them, he gave and she took the cup; and Mr. Murray looked on musingly while she filled it; then broke out again, half speaking to her, as it seemed, half speaking to himself.

"I hear at morn and even,
At noon and midnight hour,
The choral harmonies of heaven
Earth's Babel tongues o'erpower."

"All very well," said his sister; "but you must live to listen. Stop and eat your dinner, Eden."

Mr. Murray was tractable, this time. The children waited upon him carefully, albeit Maggie a little impatiently; for she wanted her talk, and the hymn quotations were not a substitute for it, in her apprehension. She toasted a slice of bread for her uncle, with

great painstaking. Esther warmed a piece of the fish. Josie handed him butter and pepper. Fenton had not yet finished his own refecton.

"Now, uncle Eden," said Maggie, when all had done, "dinner is over, and we have not had the talk you were going to give us; and I wanted to ask you something very much."

"All right, Maggie. I waited on purpose. Let Josie and Essie clear away these things, and we shall be soon ready. Come and sit down here with me."

"Uncle Eden, Benson brought two baskets with him this afternoon."

"I know he did."

"The big one had our bread and peaches and cream. What is in the little one?"

"I am going to shew you."

"Is it anything to eat?" inquired Fenton.

"Not exactly; though I have heard of people devouring it."

"Is it anything that concerns us?"

“I should say, yes.”

“Shall we like to devour it?” Maggie wanted to know. But Mr. Murray answered he could not tell. Fenton went off to hurry Josie and Esther.

“There’s some fun there, I know,” said he. “I wish you’d make haste.”

“I do make haste,” said Esther. “But it takes a while to wash up dishes, as you would know if you tried. Fenton, you might wash your hands and then take a napkin and help Josie dry the things while I wash them. We should get done so much quicker.”

“Girls’ work!” said Fenton; and he turned away, out of hearing of the suggestion.

So it was the loveliest time of evening when the little girls at last joined the group. The sun was just below the horizon. The clouds had all scattered away from the blue dome of the sky; the calm glory from the west filled it all, to the remotest horizon line. But while the eyes of the older people lingered on this wonderful display, every eye

and thought of the younger was fixed on a basket at Mr. Murray's feet.

"Now for talk, Maggie, and now for questions!" he said, as he took from it a package in brown paper; "and here is something to help us with both, I hope."

"What is it, uncle Eden?" said Maggie, as he was untying the string of the package.

"Bibles."

"Oh! —" said Maggie, while other faces fell a little, — "you have sent for some more Bibles, so that we could all read?"

"So that all can read, all your lives, I hope. Which colour, Maggie, will you have?"

"For *mine*?" said the little one, while her eyes grew large and bright, and all the faces flushed with pleasure.

"For your very own. Here is brown, and blue, and black, and red. Take your choice."

Maggie's delight it was pretty to see, as she took the brown Bible and clasped it in

her arms. The four books were just alike except in the matter of colour; rather small, but with excellent large type, and bound in soft morocco with a sort of folding edge to protect the leaves, after an English fashion. Josie, to whom Mr. Murray offered the next choice, took the red one. Esther liked the black, and Fenton was left with the blue.

“These will be your Mountain Bibles,” said Mr. Murray. “You must read them, for the sake of our talks that we have had here.”

“But we’ll have talks when we go back to Mosswood?” said Maggie.

“As long as I am there.”

“O how lovely!” Esther exclaimed, with her face all a fire with delight, “just *exactly* what I like, — so beautiful!”

“I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Murray,” said Josie. “My little Bible at home is no good, it is so fine print.”

“Now we are ready for questions, Maggie,” said Mr. Murray.

"I don't remember what they were, uncle Eden."

"Life is at the point of completeness, just now," Miss Eldon remarked.

"A full stop, eh? and not an interrogation mark," said Mr. Murray. "Well, children, let us go on where we left off. Turn to the sixth chapter of the Revelation."

"I know," said Fenton; "the eighth verse. Here it is. 'And I looked, and behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and Hell followed with him. And power was given unto them over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beasts of the earth.'"

"I don't understand that one bit, uncle Eden," said Maggie.

"What about it? What first. "

"How could a horse be *pale*?"

"Yes, I was thinking so," said Fenton.

"The strict meaning of the word in the original is grass-green."

“Ho, *green!*” cried Fenton. “There never was a green horse yet.”

“Gently. When applied to flesh, this word means greenish white, or *livid*, as we call it; the colour of the skin after death, when decay is beginning.”

“Well then, how could Hell follow with him?” Maggie went on. “Hell is a place.”

“The word there too does not mean what you are thinking of. The word is *Hades*; and that was the term by which in old times people spoke of the place of departed spirits. It was a vague term; they did not know what sort of a place it was; but as Death took the bodies of men, so Hades received the spirits, they thought; of good and bad. So in the vision, Death and Hades go together.”

“But good people go to Jesus,” said Maggie.

“The people of old time did not know Jesus. All they knew was, that the spirits of men went somewhere; and they called it ‘Hades.’”

“And in the vision, Death and Hades were personified,” said Fenton.

“Precisely.”

“But what does it mean?” said Maggie.

“You understood that the red horse and his rider meant War?”

“Yes, uncle Eden; I know that.”

“And the black horse and his rider meant Want.”

“Yes.”

“So the pale horse and his rider meant Death. And as death in this world is the separation of spirit and body, Death and Hades in the vision go together;—one to receive the bodies and the other the spirits, of men.”

“Oh!—” said Maggie, with an accent of meditative comprehension.

“They were to kill ‘with sword, and with hunger, and with *death*,’” said Esther, reading. “Isn’t every sort of killing *death*?”

“Disease is meant there.”

“And the ‘fourth part of men’? Doesn’t everybody die?”

"I am not quite sure what that expression is intended to teach," said Mr. Murray. "Perhaps, this. That a fourth part of the inhabitants of the earth at any given time are suffering under disease, famine, accident and violence."

"Oh, uncle Eden!" said Maggie, "you don't think so many?"

"I do not think it," said Mrs. Ponsonby.

"It, would amount only to this. That but three fourths of the human family, at any given time, are in perfectly sound health and vigorous life. I doubt if there be more. Disease and decay are at work upon multitudes for many years before the work is done."

"Oh, uncle Eden," said Maggie again, "why does God let it be?"

"It does not please him, Maggie. Our Father does not like to see us suffer."

"Then why doesn't he prevent it? He could."

"The body is dead, because of sin."

When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, they broke the bond that held them to life; they brought disorder into their bodies and spirits too. The Lord had told them it would be so. It is the mark of sin upon this world."

"But if God don't like it, he could stop it?"

"He does not like it. But it is very necessary that all his universe should see what sin is, and what he thinks of it. The remedy is, to come back to God and get made clean and get made whole in the blood of Jesus."

"But, uncle Eden," said Esther, "don't people die who believe in Jesus?"

"The body is dead, because of sin.' That must go back to dust. But the sting of death is gone, and the power of Hades. As Christ was not held by death and Hades, no more are his people."

"But they have to die?" said Maggie.

"It is not death, for them, Maggie. Don't you know — stop, turn in your Bibles to the

eleventh chapter of John, and see what Jesus said to Martha."

Maggie found it first, and being in her uncle's arms, he pointed out to her the verses, and she read. "'I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: and every one that liveth and believeth in me shall never die.'—But how, uncle Eden?"

"The reality of death is separation from God and ruin of body and spirit. Jesus makes his people whole, and unites them to himself for ever. Don't you see, that for them there is no *death*? Leaving this world is rather the beginning of life to them.

'Tis but seeing him nearer,
Whom always I see.'

"There is no separation from him. Their bodies are laid to *sleep* for a while, and then will be raised to a new beauty, 'made like to the body of his glory.'"

The children were silent. Fenton studied the page of John's Gospel as if he were going

to look through and through it. Mr. Murray gently turned over the leaves of Maggie's Bible and pointed his finger to another place, where Maggie read —

“ ‘ Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation ; but is passed from death unto life.’ ”

“ You see, Maggie, they *are passed* from death to life ; their condition is changed ; they are living people now.”

“ But they die ? ” said Maggie.

“ No, they sleep ; that is, their bodies do. Now read this. — ”

He turned over another leaf and pointed, and she read.

“ ‘ I am that bread of life. Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is that bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.’ ”

“ Then why does God let them be sick

and what *we* call die?" said Maggie earnestly.

"Nothing to do them any harm, little one. Our Father watches tenderly over his children and counts every hair of their heads. Sickness is one of his ways of purifying them."

"Is it?" said Maggie, with a pathetic recognition of the possible need.

"Look here, — read that."

He had turned back some leaves of her Bible, and Maggie looked down again and read. —

"‘And I will bring the third part through the fire, and will refine them as silver is refined, and will try them as gold is tried: they shall call on my name, and I will hear them: I will say, It is my people; and they shall say, The Lord is my God.’ O, that is beautiful!" cried Maggie. "Now I begin to understand."

"And dying is just going to Jesus."

"Perhaps the spirits of people sleep too, as well as their bodies," said Fenton.

"Perhaps they don't," said his uncle.

"But uncle Eden, how do you know but they do?" said Esther. "I shouldn't like to think that."

"Nor I neither," said Mr. Murray. "And there is no occasion, Essie, my dear. Turn to the fifth chapter of Second Corinthians. Read the sixth and the eighth verses."

"'Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are in the body we are absent from the Lord, we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.' — That is nice, uncle Eden."

"Nice for those," said Mr. Murray.

"And that is why, uncle Eden, you said you would just as lief die as not?"

"And that is why, Maggie, the Lord's children are often very glad indeed to die; they want so much to be with him. And Jesus often comes to them and lets them see him, even before they fairly get away, so that their faces shine with an unearthly

glory and joy unspeakable. That happened to two little boys whom I knew; among other instances."

"Brothers?" said Maggie.

"No, not brothers; they belonged to different families. And a young lady, a friend of mine, had such a smile upon her face during the last hours of her life, that her very friends who stood round her bed and were going to lose her, could not help for the moment reflecting back her smile."

"Certainly the Lord made his words good to her," said Mrs. Ponsonby.

"As he does to every one that trusts him."

Maggie drew a long breath.

"Then all those horses, uncle Eden, can do nothing to hurt anybody who belongs to Jesus?"

"On the contrary, they are working to bring the time of his kingdom. Many and many a person is driven by trouble and by want and by sickness and by pain, to seek

the Lord; and so passes from death to life. If men could live on forever, who of them ever would seek God? or if they could live on in uninterrupted pleasure?"

"So God loves them all through?" said Maggie.

"All through. Now open your Bible once more, little one; turn to the first epistle of John—further on—almost at the end of the book; there! Now get the fourth chapter, and read the eighth verse."

"‘He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.’"

"Now turn back a little, to the epistle of James."

"Here it is, uncle Eden."

"Read the seventeenth verse of the first chapter."

"‘Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning.’"

"Do you understand that? Do you see,

that your father's love, and your mother's love, and mine and every other that has blessed you, are only little bits of God's love, given to you through our hands?"

"And 'every good gift,'" added Maggie. "Our coming up on Eagle hill?"

"Yes."

"I never knew there were such beautiful things in the Bible," said Josie.

"I love my little brown Bible very much!" said Maggie, closing it with a fond touch.

"And I love my black one," said Esther.

"And I am very much obliged for my lovely red one," said Josie.

"And we have learned up here that God is our Father," said Mr. Murray.

"Yes," said Maggie slowly; "everybody's, and mine. I am very glad we came up here."

"So am I," said Fenton, "but not for that reason. And I guess that isn't your only one."

"No need that it should be," said his uncle.

There was silence for a few minutes. Shades were gathering fast over the landscape, and grey had taken the place of gold on one or two little bars of cloud that had come up in the west; and the warm resinous odour of the pines and hemlocks floated in the still air. The hour was very delicious, and perhaps almost every one's thought had wandered on away from the talk that had ceased; when Maggie suddenly came out with another question.

"Uncle Eden, when I have the tooth-ache, what does it mean?"

Fenton burst into a laugh. "It means you have a bad tooth, I should say."

"My bad tooth don't ache always," returned Maggie with dignity. "I mean, *why* does it ache?"

"Probably because you have taken cold, or maybe have got something sweet in it," said Fenton.

“Maggie’s question is reasonable,” said Mr. Murray; “and your answer, Fenton, is unreasoning, and unphilosophical.”

“What is ‘unphilosophical?’” said Maggie.

“Not according to the wisdom and truth of things.”

“Then what is the true answer?” said Maggie.

“To the question, why your tooth aches? I don’t know, my pet; unless it be that our Father has a lesson for you to learn, which you can learn so well no other way.”

“What lesson?”

“That is for you to find out.”

“Can I?”

“Would I give you a lesson to learn, and hinder you from learning it?”

“No indeed, uncle Eden.”

“Then do you think our Father in heaven would do such a thing?”

There seemed to be again so much in this for Maggie to think of, that she was silent;

and the conversation was not renewed. Fenton begged permission to kindle the bon-fire, as the moon would not be up yet for an hour or two; and permission being given, the troop of children moved off to the bon-fire place. The girls helped bring light stuff, which Fenton piled and arranged until he had, to use his own expression, "a magnificent heap;" then he struck a match, and applied it under the pile, and the young ones all crouched down on the rock round him to watch the work. First the tiny slender flame that sprung up, feeding on a little dry moss; and then the kindling of the dead leaves, swift flashing into splendour, and then the crackling twigs; and at length a steady, strong mounting blaze which went roaring and crackling up into the hemlock twigs and pine branches, and grew fierce and high every minute. The children drew back, but never took their eyes away from it.

"Aint it splendid?" said Maggie.

"You mustn't say 'aint,'" remarked Esther.

"Now that is better than candles, and better than gaslights," Maggie went on; "better than anything."

"It is prettier," said Josie.

"Miss McAllister is getting to be quite a country girl," said Fenton.

"Anybody may make excursions," said Josie. "This is an excursion."

"What *is* an excursion?" Maggie asked.

"Oh, when people put on travelling dresses and take a short journey to see something, and have hampers of cold chicken and game and champagne."

"Where's *our* game and champagne?" Fenton inquired.

"Well, we have fish and coffee."

"Let's have coffee again to-morrow," said Fenton. "It's jolly. Wouldn't this be a good place to roast potatoes!"

"We haven't got any to roast," said Maggie.

"Of course I know that!" said Fenton. "I wish we had some sweet corn, though."

I guess I'll go home and get some." And he bounded away on the spur of this thought, to attack Mr. Murray concerning it.

The flame grew and mounted, devouring a great cavity for itself in the centre of the pile of brushwood; leaping up with a strong, steady, piercing jet of fire; gathering to itself the branches on either hand; roaring and snapping and sparkling, and illumining all the hill top. The little tent glowed ruddy white in the light of it. The trees caught strange lustre overhead; the rocks gave warm gleams below. The group of elder people a little way off were clearly lit up, with Fenton standing in front of them. The little girls pushed themselves to a more respectful distance from the hot blaze. Josie and Esther were simply enjoying; but Maggie's brow shewed deep cogitation.

"I wish he would come!" she broke forth.

"Who?" said Josie.

"Oh!—that rider on the white horse. You know, the white horse means triumph.

I don't wonder they cry 'Come.' I mean to say 'Come' myself; every day."

"But that will be the end of the world," said Esther.

"O no, it wont. It'll only be the time when we shall be changed. Then we shall be made glorious, you know. More glorious than this fire. It'll be *white* light."

"What?"

"Our faces, I suppose, and our dresses, and all."

"What nonsense are you talking?"

"I'm not talking nonsense at all. Don't you know, uncle Eden said we should be made like 'the body of his glory?' That will be when he comes; and we shall all be changed."

"Only the good ones," said Esther.

"I mean the good ones. God's children."

"Wont the others be changed?" Josie asked.

"I don't know," said Esther. "Not *this* way. If they are changed at all, it wont be

shining and glorious. I should think they would grow darker."

"Why?"

"To see all the others so bright."

"Do you want to be changed?" asked Josie next. Esther hesitated, and it was Maggie that spoke.

"I wouldn't care so much about *that*," she said meditatively; "but I want those horses to be stopped from going about."

"You can't stop them," said Esther.

"I know!" said Maggie. "I know our Father will stop them by and by; but I think, maybe, he would stop them more quickly if all his children would beg him. Don't you think he would?"

Esther hesitated, and Maggie went on.

"Don't you know, he said, 'Before they call, I will answer'?"

"Before who call?"

"Why, his children; and I am one of his children. I didn't know about our Father before we came up here; but now I know

him ; and I love him, oh, so much ! I am very glad we came to Eagle hill."

"I never heard such strange things," said Josie, "as you all talk up here."

"Well, they're true," said Esther.

"Then why don't other people talk so ?"

"I guess," said Maggie slowly, "they don't know."



